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THE
John McAllister
RELIGIOUS MONITOR,

AND

EVANGELICAL REPOSITORY:

DEVOTED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION, AS SET FORTH IN
THE FORMULARIES OF THE WESTMINSTER DIVINES, AND
WITHHELD FOR BY THE

ASSOCIATE SYNOD OF NORTH AMERICA.

EDITED BY C. WEBSTER,
Pastor of the First Associate Congregation, Philadelphia.

VOLUME XVIII.

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good
way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.—Isa. vi. 10.

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MARCH, 1842.

*On the Validity of erroneous Decisions of ecclesiastical Courts,
in a Letter from the Rev. James Martin, with Notes by the
Editor.*

MR. EDITOR,—In a sermon published by me last spring, I made use of the following language: “We, therefore, fearlessly maintain, that in every case of deposition founded on a relevant charge, there is an entire cessation of office, even though an error in judgment may have been committed in the *finding* of the judicatory with respect to the proof of the matter or matters charged.” This conclusion was drawn from what I regarded as well established premises. And it is a little singular, that though the conclusion has been vehemently assailed, the premises have remained untouched—not a tongue has been moved against *them*.* But even admitting that the conclusion is unwarrantable, it can only, with propriety, be regarded as a private opinion on a point of discipline, as an expression of my views in relation to the effect of a sentence of deposition in certain cases. An importance has, therefore, been given to this opinion beyond any thing to which it is entitled.† Had it been an error on some fundamental doctrine of grace, it could hardly have called forth more zealous opposition, or been assailed with more sweeping denunciations. You, yourself, Mr. Editor, characterize it, in a late number of the Monitor, as follows:—“It is too sweeping—it is stumbling to weak believers—it pays too little regard to the rights of individuals—it is not sanctioned by the word of God, nor by the early Seceders, nor by the subordinate standards of the Associate Church, and probably never will be sanctioned by those standards.” You also say,—“The language is unsuitable—is liable to misapprehension—is producing mischief—has proved stumbling to many.” Now, if the obnoxious sentiment referred to was only half as bad as all this would make it, it ought to be renounced pub-

* Not only have his “premises remained untouched,” but have also been highly commended by the editor, with the exception of his distinction between relevant and irrelevant charges:—“It is believed this discourse will be regarded as a standard work on the subject of which it treats. His principal positions are impregnable; the illustrations clear and forcible. The work, taken as a whole, would not detract from the reputation of any author of the present day known to us, and should be extensively circulated.”—*Rel. Mon.*, vol. 17, p. 574.

† Not by the editor:—“Without adopting *every thing* in it, [the sermon,] as one or two points, comparatively unimportant, stand on debatable ground, we give it a cordial commendation.”—*Id.*

liely and speedily.* But the discerning reader will not need to be informed, that all you have said against it is naught but *naked assertion*, and whether he will pay more regard to naked assertion than to the arguments by which my conclusion stands supported, is not for me to say.†

My language, you say, "is too sweeping." If so, will not the editor, or some other person of his way of thinking, condescend to show this?‡ "It is stumbling to weak believers." I have no proof that this is the case beyond the mere assertion of the editor; neither do I believe it.§ For I cannot perceive how this view of mine on the subject of "deposition" could have the effect to induce *any* "weak believer," much less *many*, to fall into the commission of sin and scandal. "It pays 'too' little regard to the rights of individuals." I am not aware that individuals have the right to be officers in the Christian church, independent of the will of the church, or in opposition to her express determinations on the subject.|| If they have rights as ecclesiastical rulers, independent of all authority of the church in the matter, they have only to exhibit the credentials of their *extraordinary* commission, and nothing that I have said can disturb them in the possession of their *extraordinary* and *supernatural* prerogatives.¶ "It is not sanctioned by the word of God." I thought it was;** and even flattered myself that I had fully shown this in my sermon;†† but the editor says NOT! "Nor by the early Seceders." If it be not sanctioned by the "word of God," the sanction of the "early Seceders" is of little consequence. But if the editor has discovered any thing in the writings of the "early Seceders" directly on this point, he will greatly oblige me and others by laying it before his readers.‡‡ "Nor yet by the subordinate standards of the Associate Church." I hope the editor does not place these standards above the word of God, yet such a construction of his language would be quite natural. His

* We think the language complained of should have been renounced, or at least corrected, as soon as it was known to be offensive to brethren, unless the author had resolved to maintain the obnoxious sentiment which that language undoubtedly conveys.

† We merely expressed an opinion; the reader, of course, will take it for just what it may be worth. In the sequel, however, we intend to proceed a step or two beyond "naked assertion."

‡ Yes, in due time.

§ No one is required to believe it against his will. The editor has heard several persons belonging to our church declare they would never hold communion with any church maintaining the sentiment clearly conveyed by Mr. Martin's language. How far they would abide by their declaration, if put to the test, the editor is unable to say. It is not, however, the opinion of individuals, but the testimony of God's word, that must decide the point at issue.

|| Certainly not; yet they have a right to *justice* from the church, and the enjoyment of those privileges which the Head of the Church has conferred upon them.

¶ What Presbyterian minister ever supposed he held an *extraordinary* commission? It is not the *giving*, but the *taking away* the commission, that is in debate. Quite a difference, as we shall see.

** The editor thinks otherwise, and will give his reasons before concluding these notes.

†† Self-flattery is a dangerous rock, on which many make shipwreck of faith.

‡‡ If the early Seceders have said nothing "directly on this point," of course they have not sanctioned Mr. Martin's language; and it is, according to his own showing, an *innovation*. "Meddle not with them that are given to change." But the early Seceders have explicitly condemned the doctrine of Mr. Martin's language in their Answers to Nairn's Reasons of Dissent.

language, as he says of mine, is "liable to misapprehension."* But, in opposition to the editor, I believe, and may hereafter show, that "the standards of the Associate Church" *do* sanction the doctrine in question; and thus to his *assertion* I will, for the present, oppose my *belief*. "And probably never will be sanctioned by those standards." It is very probable, indeed, that if "those standards" do not *now* sanction my position, "those standards" *never will* sanction it.†

After quoting from my sermon the sentence complained of, you remark, "Had he added, 'unless the circumstances be of that peculiar character in which submission would clearly involve sin against God,' or some equivalent expression, it would have prevented much stumbling to many." Had I added the amendment here suggested by the editor, I should have been guilty of writing nonsense.‡ I was not then discussing the subject of "submission," but was endeavouring to ascertain who were the rulers spoken of in the text, (Heb. xiii. 17,) to whom submission should be yielded. This was the natural order suggested by the terms employed in the text, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." I could not intelligently discuss the nature of this "submission," without first ascertaining who were "the rulers" to whom it was due. To have, therefore, added to the sentence in question a clause respecting "submission," as suggested by the editor, when I was treating of an entirely different subject, would have rendered the whole sentence illogical, confused, and nonsensical. But it seems it would have "prevented much stumbling to many!" Let me also add, that the validity of a sentence of deposition does not, as the suggestion would imply, depend on the "submission" of the person deposed. It is indeed a novel notion, a very singular idea, to suspend the validity of a sentence of deposition by a church court on the fact of *submission* to that sentence.§ Even if my doctrine were erroneous, I should think that this one involved a far more dangerous error, as it renders the exercise of discipline altogether nugatory. For who would be willing to submit to a censure, if by non-submission he could render that censure null and void?

The idea which you throw out on the subject of submission to the decisions of church courts entirely accords with the doctrine of my sermon on that subject. For, when I came to the discussion of that point, I expressly laid down the position that "submission is

* How can the editor's language be construed as placing standards, which he calls *SUBORDINATE*, above the word of God?

† We are not wholly destitute of fears on this point, since Mr. Martin advocates it.

‡ A matter of taste. But nonsense is less pernicious to the church than plausible error, sanctioned by an influential name.

§ The editor has not done this. Mr. Martin's words necessarily implied submission. If the sentence of deposition be valid, submission becomes absolutely necessary. There is no alternative between submission and rebellion against God. But submission should go beyond the *validity* of an unjust sentence, when it would not involve any thing sinful. Consequently, the validity of a sentence and the obligation to submission are not always correlatives, any more than are ordination and the obligation of the people to hear any particular individual who may have been ordained. His notion that my words imply that the validity of a sentence of deposition depends on submission, is like his construction of the subordinate standards, as the reader may easily perceive by a reference to vol. xviii., p. 270.

not to be rendered when it would involve the commission of sin." And I insisted upon this at some length. Nor is there the least inconsistency between this doctrine and that contained in the obnoxious sentence which I have quoted at the beginning of this article.* And yet you intimate that if it were not for this "one sentence" you would republish the sermon in the Monitor. I am sorry that "one sentence," even though faulty, should so operate against the whole sermon as to put it under the *ban* of the Religious Monitor.† But why, for the same reason, was not the speech of Dr. Chalmers, which is given in the July number of the Monitor, excluded? If my sentence be faulty, that speech contains a sentence which is far more faulty. Says the Dr., "The veto law might be a good or a bad law, it was the law of the church, and these Strathbogie clergymen were bound to obey it."‡ This is much stronger than any thing I have written on the subject of submission to ecclesiastical authority. But the Doctor escapes with impunity, while I am denounced to the ends of the earth!§ What it is to have a great name!||

* I am gratified that we so exactly harmonize respecting the duty of submission. The only point of difference, then, between us, is **THE VALIDITY, THE BINDING OBLIGATION** of unjust and erroneous sentences. On this point we intend to join issue.

† This is not remarkably ingenuous. The words which Mr. M. is pleased to call "the *ban* of the Religious Monitor," are the following:—"If the author will modify his *language* in that place, not his principles, if we understand him rightly, we will give his sermon a second edition in the Monitor, for the benefit of those who have not read it." Such is the *ban*, respecting which we remark, 1. When the sermon first appeared, it was too near the close of the last volume to insert it, and before the commencement of the present volume it was known to be in the hands of many of our readers. 2. As the word "*ban*" means *anathema*, or curse, intelligent persons will probably look upon our language as a moderate, and even good-natured *curse*. 3. It was not supposed that Mr. Martin entertained erroneous views on the point in question; but that, by viewing too intently one side of the argument, he had been led to the use of language the import of which is too sweeping, and that it would be advantageous to him and the cause of truth to enjoy an opportunity to modify his language in a second edition. But it seems we were mistaken; and Mr. Martin has chosen either to join issue in the defence of an unwarranted expression, relying on his acknowledged ability to carry him through, or he really holds dangerous error. It is not for us even to conjecture which of these things may be the truth. But in either case he has undertaken a task too Herculean for a Samson. For it is not in the concentrated power of all the creatures in the universe to give validity to error or injustice in any department of Jehovah's righteous government.

‡ This will not answer Mr. M.'s purpose. Dr. Chalmers was speaking of a law of expediency regulating one of those things left to human discretion. It was an *expedient* which the church in her wisdom had adopted for the purpose of enforcing her principles, resembling our rule requiring the publication of the purpose of marriage. Now such a law may be "good or bad," according to the wisdom of its framers, while it involves no injustice, no immorality; and opposition to it may be of such a character as to manifest open contempt of the authorities of the church, which was the case with the Strathbogie ministers. A matter, this, quite different from an unjust sentence of deposition.

§ Who has been guilty of such outrageous conduct as to denounce brother Martin to the ends of the earth? Certainly not the editor. But if Mr. M. regard disagreement with any expression he may happen to use, as *persecution*, he is not yet ripe for martyrdom.

|| Names, both great and small, have but little weight with us. In this instance the name of Martin, as a sound divine, holds the preponderance, though I cannot see with him on "one comparatively unimportant point of discipline,"

As it now appears evident that there is much ignorance prevailing on this subject, I propose to cast some farther light on it, in hopes that those who now, through want of information, or through misapprehension, are opposed to the views contained in my sermon, or are in doubt respecting their correctness, may be brought to accord with them. I shall therefore begin with a brief notice of some queries which appeared on this subject in the September number of the Monitor. It is evident that the querist is unacquainted with the subject. He is not a close thinker—is confused in his ideas—misapprehends the import of terms, and is guilty of self-contradiction.* But as he is evidently honest in his "search after truth," his queries are entitled to a respectful consideration.

After quoting from my sermon the sentence which I have given above respecting "the deposition of church rulers on relevant charges," the querist mentions several texts of scripture, as also a clause in one of the questions of the Formula, as having been suggested to his mind by the reading of that sentence. I will pass any notice of these for the present, only remarking in general, that the querist evidently confounds the question of "submission" to ecclesiastical decisions with the question respecting the "validity" of sentences of deposition. These two things are entirely distinct. Yet the querist, although he quotes as the ground of his queries a sentence relating exclusively to the latter, shows plainly by his remarks that his mind was occupied with the former. This is the error which I have above noticed in the editor of the Monitor.†

The querist then proceeds to say: "I had always supposed it was the doctrine of the Protestant world, that decisions of church courts can never receive the sanction of the Lord Jesus Christ which are not agreeable to his will." On this clause I have a remark or two to make.

1. The decisions of church courts may be, in a sense, unjust, and yet be agreeable to the will of Christ. Let not the reader startle at this declaration. By the will of Christ I mean his *preceptive* will, as the querist also evidently does. Now, decisions condemning innocent persons are surely unjust towards those persons; but such decisions may be agreeable to the will of Christ. Because, it is his will, it is his express command, that church courts decide causes according to evidence. He has said, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word [or matter] be established." Now, we will suppose that a minister has been arraigned on a relevant charge, regularly brought before a court having jurisdiction in the case; and, also, that the charge has been fully established by the testimony of two or three unimpeachable witnesses. But it is known to the omniscient Lord that the witnesses have been mistaken, or have perjured themselves—a thing, however, which is not known

which, though of little practical importance, involves a principle of momentous consequence.

* Suppose we should admit the truth of all that is here said of the querist, which we do not, how could it go to establish the truth of Mr. Martin's position, that erroneous decisions are valid? Other parts of Mr. M.'s sermon impliedly condemn the doctrine which he now vindicates.

† The validity of a sentence, and the duty of submission, are indeed distinct, and, in some respects, different things; and when this difference is clearly understood, it will overthrow Mr. Martin's view. At least, so the editor thinks.

to the court, neither, indeed, can be. How, then, is the court to decide in the matter agreeably to the will of Christ? Most unquestionably, that the charge is "proven;" and to decide otherwise, although the decision would be agreeable to absolute justice, would, nevertheless, be contrary to the will of Christ. "For secret things belong to the Lord." It is the preceptive will of Christ, and not his secret will, that the court is bound to obey. And it is no part of that will that the court should be omniscient, should be able to detect hidden perjury, or should be infallible; but it does its whole duty when it carefully and conscientiously decides according to evidence; and its decisions made on such grounds, even though *unjust* towards the innocent, are valid, are "sanctioned" by the Head of the Church.*

* This argument is based on a supposed *contradiction* between the revealed and secret will of Christ, and is, therefore, not only unsound, but dangerous. According to this argument, his secret will makes a man innocent; his revealed will makes the same man guilty; and both these things at the same time! His secret will actually *justifies*, and his revealed will actually *condemns* the same person at the same time! Nor is this all; his revealed will requires the man to obey, *voluntarily*, the very thing which his secret will at the same time condemns! Ah! there are no such contradictions in God. His secret will is indeed different *from*, but not contradictory *to*, his revealed will. His revealed will is not always observed by his creatures, but his secret will is irresistible. The *former* is the rule of duty, the *latter* never. In the crucifixion of our Lord the same truth is seen. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God"—"I have power to lay down my life," &c. "This *commandment* have I received of my Father." It was, then, agreeable both to the secret and revealed will of God that our blessed Lord should suffer death for his people. The instrumentality, so far as it was inconsistent with God's revealed will, was of men. "YE have taken and by *wicked* hands have crucified and slain." There was no secret decree here *impelling* these men. The secret decree was nothing more than a decree to permit human nature to act out itself. Behold, then, in this example, a solution of the apparent difference between the secret and revealed will of God, and the perfect harmony that exists between both.

The argument may be stated thus:—1. God has given to man liberty of will, which is the foundation of moral obligation; but by the fall he lost *ability* to choose that which is morally good; by which his will is now limited to the choice of moral evil. 2. God's revealed will *was* and continues to be for ever the one only and infallible rule of man's obedience. But, 3. God, foreseeing that the will of man, as fallen, would invariably choose evil, and only evil, decreed (which is his secret will) to renew the will of some to obedience, and to leave others to will and act according to their nature, and then punish them for disobedience to his revealed will. His secret will to renew some did not *contradict* his revealed will, which requires obedience of all; did not impel the wicked in their course; did not furnish them with any excuse for their wickedness; did not give *validity* to any of their acts. "The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." Hence says the Confession, "so as thereby neither is God the author of sin," and we may add, neither the *approver* of sin, "nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established."

Again, while God's people are always worthy of fatherly chastisements from his hand, they may be, and most generally are, innocent of the particular sin or sins, against their neighbour, charged upon them, and which wicked men seize upon as a pretended justification of their persecution. In cases of this kind, which are of every day occurrence, there is no contradiction between the secret and revealed will of God. For, 1. Both his secret and revealed will, in the unjust sufferings of his people, are alike. It is according to both that they should suffer for righteousness' sake by patiently enduring the evil as it comes from the hand of God; and by bearing a testimony against and resisting it, in the use of all lawful means, as it comes from these wicked instruments, whe-

2. There is much vagueness of meaning in the term "sanction," as here used by the querist. What does he mean by Christ's "sanctioning" a decision? Is it his "sanction" which is supposed to

ther witnesses or judges, who abuse their own liberty of will by acting against God's revealed will, which, of course, implies a denial, on the part of the righteous, of the validity of their wicked acts; and, also, of the least obligation to *submit* to them, on the ground of such acts, or because such acts have been done. It is, then, both the secret and preceptive will of God that his people should, in some cases, patiently bear persecution, while they deny the validity and condemn the injustice of those acts by which they suffer. 2. The revealed will of God, which requires justice, is equally obligatory upon the righteous and the wicked in the case supposed, and his secret will is, that justice shall ultimately prevail by the infliction of dire vengeance upon the violators of his revealed will. Consequently there is no *contradiction* between the revealed and secret will of God, although the necessary freedom of man's will creates an apparent difference to the mind of a superficial observer. And the providence of God is simply the execution of both his *secret* and preceptive will. His revealed will condemns all error, all injustice; and his secret will is to punish all error, all injustice. Strange, indeed, that *that* error and injustice which is condemned, and will be punished by God, should be binding either upon the conscience or conduct of men! Well may the authors of this doctrine with a remarkable coincidence call upon their readers not to startle at its declaration! Our prayer to God is that the readers of the Religious Monitor may startle, and not only startle, but fortify themselves against the inroads of this error, and all similar errors, by drinking more copious draughts at the fountain of living waters. The more deeply the minds of men become imbued with the word and Spirit of the living God, the more odious and execrable will every species of error become in their estimation. Alas! is not injustice already sufficiently rampant in the world? Must it also be favoured with the special pleadings of the ministers of our holy religion?

This supposed unjust decision, then, is no more valid than the sentence of Pilate against our Lord. For, though the court may be innocent while it has acted uprightly, their innocence can never give validity to the mistakes or perjury of witnesses which constitute the basis of their decision; because, to use the language of Mr. Martin, "Error, whether honest or not, can make nothing valid." But this forced admission is a direct contradiction of the language of the sermon which has given so much dissatisfaction. The decision in question, then, not being in itself valid, is not binding on the conscience, and the question of submission or non-submission turns wholly on other considerations. It is left with the conscience of the innocent man to decide what course truth and duty may require, as he must answer for himself, and not the court for him, at the judgment seat of Christ. If it involve *merely* personal considerations, submission is due rather than schism. "Why do ye not suffer wrong?" But whether it can ever happen that a minister of Jesus Christ can be unjustly suspended without involving, to a certain extent, along with his personal interests, the public interests of religion, is at least doubtful. Consequently, to say that unjust deposition on a relevant charge *never* involves any thing beyond personal interest, and that in *every case* there is an entire cessation of office, that every such decision is *valid*, is to contradict both scripture and reason, and rush against the uniform practice of prophets, apostles, and of our Lord himself. They never submitted, in a single instance, to such injustice as would interfere with the performance of their official duty. Nor did they submit because they regarded or acknowledged as *valid* either erroneous or unjust decisions. No, no. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

That the individual unjustly excinded must, for the time being, lose his visible privileges in the society which has excluded him, is not the point in dispute. For every society possesses supreme power over its own members. And when God is about to destroy a public body, he may so far give up her members, some to bad motives, and others to be deceived in judgment, that she may unjustly exclude her most valuable members. Of course they must go out, and the gracious presence of God may go with them; or he may depart from both parties, both being equally criminal, and make of them a full end; or, if he preserve the integrity of the society, on account of the truth and holi-

give "validity" to a decision? After a decision is made, must it await his sanction before it can be called valid? And if so, how does he give his sanction? For my part, I know of no other sanction which Christ gives to ecclesiastical decisions, than the approbation and concurrence of his word and providence. When a decision is made, the only question concerning its validity is, Does the word of God allow or admit of its validity? Is it agreeable either to the letter or spirit of the word, that the decision in question should be held as valid? And Providence also may be viewed as concurring in the matter by giving outward manifestations of that validity. Hence, both civil and ecclesiastical deeds may be treated by God as valid, though he do not approve of them. The king of Babylon deposed Jeremiah, the lawful king of Judah, and placed Zedekiah in his room, and yet the validity of this deed is acknowledged by Jehovah, though the deed itself fell under his disapprobation, as being unlawful and unjust. The Israelites *rejected* Samuel, yea God himself, and would have a king to reign over them. "And God gave them a king in his anger, and took him away in his wrath." He disapproved of the deed, but at the same time sanctioned it, or gave validity to it. It often happens that a good ruler is removed by the people from office, and a bad one put in his place. The deed, I apprehend, is disapproved of by God, at the same time that it is regarded as valid, and the people required to yield submission. But I need pursue this point no farther. All that is necessary to be known in relation to the *depositions* of which I speak in the sermon, is this, Does the word of God accord validity to them? And the whole object of my argument was to support the affirmative, which argument has not yet been met.* But to proceed to the queries.

ness which is still found in the great mass of her people, he may put his mark of disapprobation on the leaders of both contending parties. But, though we may not be able to discover the true import of God's providence in such cases, we do know that the Judge of all the earth will do right, and that so far from giving validity to error or injustice, he will assuredly punish both. It cannot, therefore, be true that in *every case* of erroneous deposition, an entire cessation of office follows. "It is only so far as its [the church's] administrations accord with the rule of God's word, that they can have the approbation of the Head of the Church, or be binding upon the consciences of her members."—(*Stevenson on the Offices of Christ*, p. 323.) Few persons will venture to maintain that Dr. Stevenson was *ignorant* of the principles of the Secession Church. This language also harmonizes with the inspired word of God. "The Lord is great in Zion, and he is high above ALL the people. The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish *equity*: thou executekest judgment and righteousness in Jacob."

* This argument places church courts on a par with the king of Babylon, and that apostate generation which rejected both God and Samuel. But it may be observed, 1. In these instances God is inflicting punishment upon men for sin; and though he employed wicked men as the instruments, it was by permitting them to act out their corrupt nature. He held their acts null and void, and punished them for those acts. 2. This argument sets up divine providence in the place of divine law as the rule of our conduct. 3. So far as God held the acts of the people valid in choosing a king, it was right as to the matter of it. Their sin consisted in rejecting God, not in the choice of a king, though that choice proceeded from a wrong motive. It is in *itself* right for nations to set up forms of government, and choose rulers according to the form which they have agreed upon, provided the divine law be not violated. And so far as the divine law was violated in the cases cited, it was not held valid, but punished. From all which it appears, that as the acts of rulers which are

Query "1. If unjust judgment be an abomination to the Lord, does he require his people to submit voluntarily to an abomination?"

Answer. As this question relates to the duty of "submission," I would refer the querist, for an answer to it, to what I have said on that subject in the second part of my sermon. The "holy child Jesus" submitted to an "unjust judgment," and I do not think that it would be sinful in his people to walk in his footsteps. (See 1 Pet. ii. 18—21.) Even the querist himself afterwards admits that it might be "expedient" to submit to an "unjust judgment." There is a wide difference between submitting to an "unjust judgment," when our own personal interests only are concerned, and submitting when the interests of God's cause are concerned. In the latter case we do not plead for submission.

Q. "2. Can honest error in judgment make that judgment valid?"

A. Error, whether honest or not, can make nothing valid. Though a decision involving "an error in judgment" may be valid, it is surely not the *error* that makes it valid. Its validity depends on other grounds, as I have shown.

Q. "3. Can a conviction upon a relevant charge, established by perjury, make the judgment of the court binding?"

A. The perjury of witnesses cannot affect the validity of the decisions of the court, while that perjury is a secret hid from the court. If the court act according to this divine prescription, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established," its decisions are valid,* although Omniscience may discover perjury in the witnesses.

After propounding these queries, the writer adds: "If this doctrine be true, all that the enemies of a faithful minister have to do, is, not to charge him for preaching the truth, which is the real cause of their offence, but with some immorality, and suborn witnesses to substantiate their relevant charge, as they did against Jeremiah and our Lord himself, and thus they stop the mouth of the Lord's witnesses. For such is the malicious spirit of apostates, that they are not stumbled by the sin of perjury. If they will take the life when opportunity offers, they will also swear away the character."

The amount of all this is, that if my doctrine on the subject of deposition be true, then faithful ministers are in danger of being unjustly deprived of their office. The writer's fears, I apprehend, are chiefly owing to his ignorance of the rules of discipline. He is afraid of the malice of apostates. But Christ's courts, acting according to the rules of his house, will not allow apostates, and such vile characters, either to bring charges or to bear witness against

just as to the *matter* of them, are valid, notwithstanding their personal wickedness or corrupt motives, so those acts which are unjust as to the *matter* of them, are not valid, though the court may have acted uprightly. 4. This doctrine of the validity of unjust decisions makes God the *approver* of sin. Fearful, but, to my mind, irresistible inference.

* We have seen the contrary to be true; though the *court* may have obeyed the divine law, and are not to be censured. We do not, however, believe that the Head of the Church allows his servants to be deceived in the judgment of such matters, unless they, or a portion of them, are under some unworthy influence. That a portion, at least, of the members of courts are frequently under such influence it would be childish to deny.

faithful ministers.* Even members in good standing in the church, if suspected of being under the influence of malice or improper counsel, will not be allowed to appear against ministers, without at least submitting to "purgation," as it is called. That it is within the range of possibility for a minister to be convicted through the perjury of witnesses, is admitted.† But in such a case his only remedy is "to commit his way to God, and trust in him," and wait till He "bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noon-day." (Ps. xxxvii. 5, 6.)‡ The writer seems to think that a court ought to be able to detect the wickedness of the human heart, and to decide with omniscient and infallible accuracy, otherwise their decisions are not valid.§ But if he will only think a little more closely on the subject, he will be able, from the hints I have thrown out, to take a more just and rational view of the matter. I am not aware that either Jeremiah or our Lord was ever "deposed" by a competent court on a relevant charge, the court having merely "committed an error in judgment with respect to the proof of the matter or matters charged." This reference to cases that have not the slightest relation to the matter in hand is a very unfair way of reasoning, because of its effect on unsophisticated minds.||

When the querist, in conclusion, admits that it might be "expedient" to submit to an unjust sentence, he evidently contradicts the spirit and scope of the whole article. I might turn upon him and ask, Is it *expedient* "to submit voluntarily to an abomination?" &c. He would place submission on the ground of expediency. I am for placing it on higher ground—the authority of God speaking in the holy scriptures.¶

Let me now advert a moment to the passages of scripture which he says were suggested to his mind by the sentence quoted from my sermon. The passages are merely referred to, without being quoted: had they been quoted, I should not have been under the necessity of noticing them at all; for the moment the reader casts his eyes on them, he will perceive that they have nothing to do with the subject in hand. He first refers to Prov. xvii. 15, "He that justifieth

* It is quite possible the querist, notwithstanding his "ignorance," may have had the Jews in Jeremiah's day, and at the coming of our Lord, in his mind. They were members of the church in good standing in the sight of men. And such apostates are the most malignant, most dangerous enemies of God's people.

† Here is one case, then, in which an unjust decision is not valid, unless God give validity to iniquity.

‡ This remark relates to submission, not the validity of the sentence; and we have already seen that submission may be a duty on other grounds, provided it be that kind of submission which does not recognise the validity of the sentence. But all this iniquity might be committed to prevent the preaching of the gospel, which was the design of the enemies of our Lord. If so, he cannot wait. Had this principle prevailed, the reformation would never have occurred; nay, the church would never have been established on earth. For relevant charges were brought against prophets, apostles, and reformers.

§ We suppose the writer of the queries never entertained such a thought.

¶ Were they not acknowledged rulers in both cases? Did they not sit in Moses' seat? They not only deposed our Lord from office, but cast his hearers out of the synagogue.

¶ We place submission to unjust decisions upon the conscience of the deposed man as to the path of duty. It belongs to him to judge whether submission in the particular case would really involve him in sin or not. Submission to just decisions must, of course, be yielded from a regard to the authority of God.

the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord." This text refers to the wilful perversion of justice, contrary to evidence, and cannot apply to the decisions of an upright court, honestly aiming at truth and righteousness, though falling into an error of judgment. This text he "compares" with Acts v. 29: "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than man." Peter and the other apostles had been forbidden by a notoriously corrupt and infidel council, to preach the gospel as God had expressly commanded them, and when called to account by the same council, for disobeying their wicked injunction, they said, "We ought to obey God rather than man." And does the querist really think that there is any resemblance between that case and the "depositions" of which I am treating? For my part, I can see none. If the deposed rulers spoken of could plead an express revelation from heaven for the continuance of their office, as the apostles did, then their deposition should be treated as null and void. In that case the text referred to would be in point. But who, now, except a superstitious fanatic, would ever think of offering such a plea? He next refers to Exod. xx. 16: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." Compared with Matt. xxvi. 60: "At the last came two false witnesses." Acts vi. 13: "And set up false witnesses, who said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law." Jer. xi. 19—23: "I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof," &c.; xviii. 18, "Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah," &c.; xxxvii. 15, "Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison," &c. Col. iii. 18: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." But what has any of these passages to do with my doctrine on the subject of deposition? The man must surely possess very peculiar powers of association to have these passages suggested to his mind by that doctrine. Because "it is fit" that "wives should submit themselves to their own husbands in the Lord," must we infer that the office of church rulers does not cease with their deposition on a relevant charge? The correctness of such an inference I am utterly unable to see. The other passages referred to are equally inapplicable.* And as for the clause in the "sixth

* It is supposed these texts contain some general principles applicable to the point. But why did he not notice Luke ix. 49, 50, referred to by the querist? The parallel passage in Mark ix. 38—40, reads thus:—"And John answered him saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part." This passage, taken in connexion with Numbers xi. 26—28, evidently teaches that unjust deposition, by any particular branch of the visible church, does not necessarily, and of itself, exclude either private members from sealing ordinances, nor ministers from office. If the man has received his commission in a regular manner, from any acknowledged branch of the visible church; if he have done no act to forfeit that commission, the Lord Jesus Christ will acknowledge him; the dissolution of his former outward connexion was not his sin. For valid deposition must not only be, in the language of Mr. Martin, "for cause," but for SUFFICIENT CAUSE. This view is sustained by approved commentators, Gill, Scott, Guise, and Henry. "That which is good, and doeth good, must not be prohibited, though there may be some defect or irregularity in the manner of doing it." "Preaching down sin,

question of the Formula," ("remembering that while they act uprightly," &c.,) I have only to say that it is in perfect accordance with the doctrine of the sermon, where it is assumed, that the court deposing a ruler, in the case given, acts "uprightly," that is, "honestly" and "sincerely," though not "infallibly."

Having thus answered the queries of "One in Search of Truth," I will now add a few remarks for the further elucidation of the position, that "in every case of deposition grounded on a relevant charge, there is an entire cessation of office, even though an error in judgment may have been committed in the finding of the judicatory with respect to the proof of the matter or matters charged."

When I speak of "deposition," I mean the sentence of a regularly constituted court of Christ's house, having jurisdiction in the case, and acting under a due sense of accountability, by which a ruler in the church is divested of his official character. By a "relevant charge" I do not mean the imputation of some sin in the abstract, or the abstract characteristic of a sin, but I mean the specified sinful act itself which is charged upon the accused, and which only needs to be proved to have been committed by him, to warrant the infliction of censure. By an "error in judgment," I mean an unintentional error or mistake committed by the court, after all due pains have been taken to arrive at truth and justice in the case. Now, an "error in judgment" with respect to the proof of the matter or matters charged" upon the person accused, may be committed in three different ways. 1. In admitting as proof that which is not technically *legal*, though true and sufficient. 2. In judging insufficient proof to be sufficient. And, 3. In deciding proof to be legal and sufficient which is founded in mistakes or perjury. By the *first* of these no real injury is done to the accused; by the *last* he is indeed injured, but no blame can be attached to the court, an error of this

and preaching up Christ, are good things, very good things, which ought not to be forbidden to any, merely because they *follow not with us*." "If Christ be preached, Paul therein doth, and will rejoice, though he be eclipsed by it, Phil. i. 18."—(*Henry on the place*.) Consequently it is admitted, that when a man is deposed unjustly, he must go out of the body excluding him, for the time being; for, in the language of Synod's committee, (February number, p. 416,) "it is utterly unreasonable that a man should disobey the decision of a church court, and claim communion with them at the same time;" "if duty binds a man to disobey a church court, it binds him to withdraw from their communion." And if he be a minister of the gospel, it is his duty, in this instance, to continue the exercise of his ministry elsewhere. It is not therefore true that in *EVERY* such case there is an entire cessation of office; and this is one safeguard against that abuse of official power which is so generally prevalent in times of defection from the cause of God.

* It is, indeed, assumed and *asserted* in the sermon, that the supposition of corrupt motives and wilful error in the court is not allowable, p. 15. This assumption is not in accordance with the testimony of scripture, nor the history of the church. The Spirit of God testifies—"As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee, cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." Is. iii. 12. "Are ye not partial in yourselves, and become judges possessing evil thoughts." James ii. 4. "How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?" Ps. lxxxii. 2. We hazard nothing in asserting that the greatest calamities that ever afflicted the church of God have been brought in through the instrumentality of her rulers. How, then, can it be admitted that corrupt motives are not supposable? This claim of purity is as preposterous as the claim of infallibility.

kind being inseparable from a court lacking the attribute of omniscience. By the *second* only is the court reprehensible, and personal injury at the same time inflicted. But we believe that it is very rare that a court ever errs in this second way. The process of probation is so conducted by church courts, the testimony is so sifted, that the committal of an error here is almost necessarily precluded. Still the human mind is so constituted that it may err in this way. Our Lord has appointed courts in his house possessing this liability. And now the only question is, whether the undesigned and unknown committal of an error in either of the ways mentioned, divests the decision of all binding force. Observe, if an error be committed, I assume that it is *unknown* to the court, and known only to the person affected by it. Does his knowledge, therefore, render the decision null and void, and justify his disobedience to it? If so, then, does he not possess in himself the powers of a supreme court, or rather, a "court for the correction of errors?" The absurdity of such an idea is obvious.*

* Who ever inculcated such an idea? But this has nothing to do with the validity of injustice, the thing which we deny. Yet it may be replied, Of course no individual can be a supreme court over his ecclesiastical superiors. Nor can he either review or reverse their deeds. But the Lord Jesus Christ is supreme over both him and the court, and he must ascertain whether the Lord require him to resist or submit. If it be merely a personal affair, he must submit. By *personal* affair, in these notes, we intend personal worldly interests; for God has given us no more liberty to surrender our own, than the spiritual interests of others. Any man had better surrender his natural life than such rights. Matt. xvi. 26; Luke xii. 4, 5. A surrender of personal interests, then, to a wrong decision, is limited to those inferior censures which do not *divest us wrongfully of any of the appointed means of grace*. It is, then, our deliberate conviction that this newly invented distinction between *relevant* and *irrelevant* charges, or rather the inference which Mr. Martin has drawn from it, is calculated to blindfold the church to her utter ruin and desolation. Because, 1. The courts are themselves the judges of the relevancy of the charge; and if they sometimes condemn on irrelevant charges, as is admitted by both parties, they may pronounce an irrelevant charge to be relevant, and the result is the same. 2. The charges, many of them at least, brought against the prophets, and our Lord and his apostles, were relevant charges, as any reader of the Bible may easily perceive. Our Lord himself was charged with imposture, blasphemy, drunkenness, and gluttony, every one of them *relevant* charges; consequently, according to Mr. Martin's doctrine, his condemnation on any one of these charges would be valid! 3. A charge may be relevant, and connected with such circumstances as to be scarcely censurable at all; and yet, in time of party spirit, rivalry, ambition, personal hostility, and the like, as was the case twenty years since in our own church, (as the reader will perceive by a reference to Mr. Miller's second letter,) and which things were the origin of nearly all our subsequent troubles; I say, at such a time, men may be deposed on relevant charges in such a manner that submission to the court would be rebellion against Christ. 4. Nothing is easier in the world than to prefer a relevant charge against any man, for every outward breach of the moral law is a relevant charge; and who dare say he is not guilty of a single outward breach of the divine law, in word or action? 5. This doctrine, were it to prevail, would introduce into the church a "reign of terror." The ecclesiastical guillotine would so terrify men that they would either abandon the ministry altogether, or become fawning sycophants at the footstool of power. Indeed, since I heard of this doctrine, my own head feels loose on my shoulders. 6. It is one fatal step over that line of demarkation which separates the kingdom of Christ from the Romish Anti-christ, and liberty from despotism. The priests, Ezra ii. 61—63, referred to by Synod's committee, p. 415 of last number, could not show that they ever had held the commission. And in the case of Joshua, xxii. 10—31, no decision was made, just or unjust; or, at least, it is certain that no unjust decision was made.

In the sermon I concede to the church collective, the right to judge of the relevancy of charges, as she is "the ground and pillar of the truth." It is her duty to judge of truth and error, holiness and sin, as these are exhibited in "the law and the testimony." And, therefore, convictions on irrelevant charges are not to be supposed to have her concurrence. But as the *proof* of a relevant charge involves a mere question of *facts*, the church collective is not competent to decide in the matter. She has never been constituted a judge of such questions of fact. How are the facts to be submitted to such a tribunal? How are the parties to be heard, the testimony taken? &c. She is not in a proper capacity for sitting in judgment on mere matters of fact. These are to be determined by the judicatories of the church, which God has appointed for this purpose, and in their determinations she is supposed to acquiesce.* And I can see no reason why the individual concerned should not also acquiesce, instead of converting himself into a court for the correction of errors, whether real or feigned.

Again, the conviction of a person on an irrelevant charge is a matter in which the whole church is concerned; the public cause of God is affected by it. For an irrelevant charge is one which involves no sin or scandal; consequently, to censure a person on such a charge would be to convert that into a sin and scandal which contravenes no point either of law or gospel, and would therefore be a moral heresy, detrimental to the public cause of truth and holiness. Hence, as "depositions" grounded on irrelevant charges affect the public interests of religion and morality, they cannot be regarded as valid, neither are they to be submitted to. But the case is altogether different when depositions are grounded on relevant charges. The public cause is not affected. It is an individual concern—a personal matter.† The public cause of truth and holiness is maintained and defended in the judicial declaration that the alleged error in doctrine or immorality in practice is "relevant," and in a manifestation of a readiness to inflict the merited censure. The subsequent trial of the charge merely involves a question of fact. And if wrong be done here, it is only individual wrong, not a wrong done to the public cause of God, and should therefore be submitted to. Yes, if the decision of the court be deposition from office, it is only to be regarded as a private injury, and what can the individual lawfully do but submit?‡ He cannot transfer his cause to the church collective for further adjudication, because God never appointed her

* Here we have the doctrine of implicit faith and blind submission. What has this to do with the validity of injustice? But, as the preceding notes answer this objection, we need not repeat.

† We have already seen, if unjust, it is not always a mere personal matter.

‡ What has this to do with the question? It is not submission that we dispute, but the *validity* of injustice and submission on that ground. What the innocent man is to do is quite another matter, and may be gathered from the preceding notes. It is the *final* unjust decision of the supreme court of the church that is to be resisted, if submission would be sinful; and the question is not varied, in my opinion, whether the decision was on a relevant or irrelevant charge. That submission must be yielded while "seeking redress," is established by Synod's committee beyond controversy. For it is a perfect absurdity to ask any privilege of a court whose authority is denied, or whose will is disregarded. It must also be observed that we regard resistance to just decisions of church courts as rebellion against God, which, if persisted in, will destroy the rebel.

to be a judge in such matters;* he cannot by any assumed revisory powers set aside the decision himself; what is he to do? Shall he erect the standard of revolt,† and gather around it a party, and pretend to preach the gospel to them?‡ Is he thus to form a schism in the church?§ And should he do so, what would be the peculiar and distinguishing feature in such an organization? Why, that their leader is not guilty of the fact charged upon him! Hence, the new erection is not for the purpose of maintaining the public cause of God,|| but the private cause of the ringleader of the faction!

Nay, although I have employed a new *distinction* when treating of the subject of deposition, (I refer to the use of the terms "relevant" and "irrelevant,") I have introduced no "new doctrine." For I wish it to be borne in mind, that while depositions grounded on *irrelevant* charges affect the *public* cause of God, depositions on *relevant* charges are necessarily matters of *private* and *individual* concern.¶ And now, admitting that wrong may be done to individuals by their "depositions" from office, still they are to submit to the authority deposing them. This has always been the doctrine of the church, the assertions of some to the contrary notwithstanding.**

In the Testimony of the Original Seceders it is declared to be "sinful to break off communion from a particular church on slight grounds, or such as do not affect the *great ends* of ecclesiastical fellowship." Again, "It must be sinful to break off this communion on account of *wrong decisions of church courts in personal causes.*"†† Pages 156, 157. "Many decisions," then, which merely affect individuals, are to be submitted to, since they do not constitute a warrantable ground of separation from the church making those "wrong decisions." Our own Testimony obviously teaches the same doctrine in the article headed "Of Separation from Corrupt Churches," particularly at the beginning of the 2d section. And also in the article "Of Presbyterian Church Government," sec. 5, where these words occur: "We ought not to oppose any decision of the courts of Christ, unless we are fully persuaded in our own minds that *his truth and cause* would suffer by our silence." Observe the lan-

* If not a judge in such matters, she is a judge of them, so far as may be necessary for the regulation of her own conduct.

† Yes; if submission would be sinful, raise the standard of revolt, notwithstanding the relevancy of the charge.

‡ Not *pretend*, but actually preach the gospel to them with all his might, in the case which we have supposed.

§ Not at all; the guilty authors of the injustice, whoever they be, have made schism. A good man would not make schism. But whatever may be the difficulties thrown in the way of an innocent man in such a case, these can no more give validity to the injustice in this case, than mere superior force can give validity to its oppressions of the weak and defenceless. 2 Pet. ii. 9.

|| Justice is *identified* with the public cause of God. All oppressive powers have regarded resistance to their claims as faction. Elijah, Jeremiah, and Micah were treated as factious persons. The apostles were factious; the primitive Christians under pagan Rome were a faction. The Waldenses, the reformers from Popery, the Covenanters of Scotland, and the Secession itself, were all factions.

¶ We have seen that deposition on a relevant charge *may* involve matters beyond private and individual interests.

** In cases merely personal, though he must bear witness against the wrong.

†† This relates to *voluntary breaking off* of communion, not unjust *excision*.

guage, not *our individual cause or personal character*, but Christ's *truth and cause* — *

Dr. McCrie, in his *Sermons on the Unity of the Church*, says, "I think myself warranted by scripture, and supported by the sentiments of the soundest divines who have treated this subject, when I state that separation from such a church cannot be vindicated, when it proceeds on such grounds as the following:—wrong decisions in personal causes, or particular acts of mal-administration, when they are not of *lasting injury to the whole body*," &c.

What is this but to say that such decisions are to be submitted to? Dr. Anderson is very explicit on this point. "It is allowed," says he, "that in private and personal causes, which concern us in our individual capacity only, while there is no imposition on the conscience, we are to submit to the sentences of church judicatures; or at least acquiesce in those which are in the last resort, even though we do not see the equity of them. For when we have used the means of divine appointment for obtaining the redress of private and personal grievances without success, we are then to sacrifice our own matters to the peace of the church."—*Alexander and Rufus*, p. 196.† These quotations cover the whole ground which I have taken in my sermon. They teach the doctrine of submission to the decisions of church courts, even when those decisions may injuriously and unjustly affect the character and standing of individuals, provided the public cause of truth and holiness remains unaffected. And this is precisely the case, as we have seen, with depositions on relevant charges. Such are, therefore, to be submitted to, and treated as valid.‡ And if this be done, there is certainly a cessation of the

* Every word here relates to the duty of submission. Not a word respecting the validity of unjust decisions. A radical difference. And the language of these fathers respecting submission implies that erroneous decisions are not valid.

† Not a word of the validity of unjust decisions; but the whole clearly implies that they are never valid. Now, compare this with the words of Mr. Martin's sermon, as quoted by himself at the head of his article; and also his other declaration, "Her depositions from office on relevant charges, even though founded in errors of judgment, ARE VALID, ARE BINDING, in every case."—*Page 15 of the Sermon*. This is the language that Mr. M. defends!

‡ "Treated as valid," is not the language of the sermon, yet scarcely less objectionable. To treat a sentence as valid is to submit to it for conscience sake, on the ground of God's authority in the sentence; which amounts to a declaration that the authority of God binds us to look upon injustice as sanctioned by himself. But it is said the church may err in ordaining, and yet the ordination be valid; consequently, her deposition must be equally valid, though erroneous. We reply, 1. The validity of ordination is not limited to the particular church which confers it, but reaches to the ends of the earth, so long as the man abides by his ordination vows, as to the *matter* of them: now he never vowed to acknowledge the validity of error, nor submit to such injustice as would rob him or the church of any spiritual privilege. So his *disjunction* from the church which ordained him, if it be effected by the injustice of others, does not invalidate his commission. To maintain the opposite would be to rush into the preposterous claims of high church prelacy. 2. In ordination the church is made the sole judge of the candidate's qualifications, with the caution to "lay hands suddenly on no man." It is a discretionary act, in no respect affecting moral character, or rights, or covenant obligations. She has also the undoubted right to employ such officers as she may choose. But, 3. When once employed, there is a covenant between the minister and the appointing power, also between him and his people, if he have a charge, which had no previous existence. Covenant obligations are not things to be invalidated in

office from which the deposition has been made, at least in the estimation of the court and in the estimation of the church, whatever may be the case in his own estimation.

the sight of God by any error or injustice of man. The rights, the character, the usefulness, and the means of the man's salvation are all involved. These things do not, like ordination, lie within the discretion or pleasure of the court. Unjust deposition does, indeed, take away these rights in the estimation of those who have inflicted the injury, whether they have acted uprightly or not. In general, the less upright they have been, the more keen will be their pursuit of the injured party. This is human nature. Men are most solicitous to justify those actions which are least defensible; and are also most irreconcilable to those whom they have injured most. Joseph's brethren could never be reconciled to him. Gen. i. 15—17. The deposed man must of necessity leave the *outward* connexion for the time being; but this is not the question. It is the *validity* of unjust deposition, and entire cessation of office, *sub toto cælo*, for which Mr. Martin pleads, and which we deny.

The following summary will express the principal points we have attempted to establish in these notes:—

1. Rebellion against just decisions of church courts is rebellion against God.
2. Disobedience to acts of expediency which involve no immorality or injustice is also rebellion against God.
3. The ordination of any particular person to the office of the holy ministry is an act of expediency or discretion, and therefore valid, being one of those things which Christ has given his church power to bind on earth.
4. The distinction which has been recently invented in our church between relevant and irrelevant charges, and the conclusion drawn from that distinction, that deposition from office, and, of course, exclusion from church privileges, is in *every case* valid and binding, is an unscriptural and dangerous innovation upon the principles of the church.
5. Unjust decisions are never, in any case, either valid or binding.
6. Unjust decisions involving merely personal worldly interests are to be submitted to, not because they are valid, but because it is the will of God that we should sacrifice our worldly interests, if need be, for the good of the church.
7. Ministers regularly ordained by the proper authority *hold*, though they did not *receive*, their office by the same *tenure* as did the apostles, as is evident from Matt. xxviii. 20, and also from their covenant with God at their ordination. Consequently,
8. No human power can divest them of the office without **SUFFICIENT CAUSE**; nor can they forego its exercise in obedience to any unrighteous mandate of human authority.
9. Submission is always due during every stage of process in a cause, till the final issue. If that issue deprive the man, unwarrantably, of any spiritual privilege, or the exercise of any official function, secession, for the time being, becomes unavoidable.
10. It frequently happens that parties arise from love of pre-eminence, or some other personal worldly considerations, and imperceptibly draw others, by their profession of zeal for truth and purity, into their folds; which leads to a state of things destructive to the just government of the church, in defiance of the most strenuous efforts of her wisest and best rulers. In such cases we may almost invariably look for unjust decisions, because *ascendency*, not justice, is the object in view; and it may be anticipated that the majority will exclude the minority as a necessary act of self-preservation. It would be strange indeed if entire cessation of office followed in every such case!
11. This new controversy is to be regretted, more especially as it has a tendency to create a suspicion in the minds of those unacquainted with the facts, that the excised brethren have been unjustly excluded, and that a resort is had to the doctrine we oppose, in order to give validity to those acts of our church courts by which they were deprived of their standing. But there is no real foundation for any such suspicion; for, although the highly disreputable ambition, personal hostility, and passion of former members of the Presbytery of Cambridge were the real origin of the breach, yet the excised brethren carried matters to such a length that their excision became not only *just*, but absolutely necessary; in *no other way* could the church maintain

I intended to have added other proofs in support of my position, and particularly to have exhibited the views of the "Reformers" and "early Seceders" on this subject, but I have not space at present. I hope I may be favoured with an opportunity of doing this at a future time.

JAMES MARTIN.

either her principles or her integrity. Such being the case, it appears to us no notice should have been taken either of them or their publications; their unfounded claim to be the Associate Church, had they been let alone, would have sunk speedily under the weight of its own absurdity; as matters now stand, they will probably continue to exist in their present organization so long as the members and courts of the church continue to dispute with them. On the other hand, if their excision was really unjust, as they say, no human power can prevent their ultimate and triumphant success.

It appears to us the continual agitation of subjects the very contemplation of which is distressing to a pious mind, has a tendency to do incalculable mischief to the public interests of religion. We regret that we cannot see with many of our brethren on this point. We are compelled to believe that the persevering discussion of events in themselves so lamentable, and mingled as these have been with so great an amount of human infirmity, will eventually injure a righteous cause. This, however, is only a question of expediency.

N. B.—I am not conscious of any impropriety of language or manner in the preceding notes. Should any thing of that kind appear, it will be deeply regretted by me. I believe I have truth in hand, but whether I shall be able to vindicate it *successfully* is quite another matter. But as Mr. Martin has replied to a passing remark of mine respecting the import of his language, this answer became unavoidable.

Dr. Chalmers' Works.

THE Works of Thomas Chalmers, D. D., Professor of Theology in the University of Edinburgh, in 7 volumes, 12mo., each volume averaging about 420 pages. New York, 1842; Robert Carter, 58 Canal street.

Volumes I. and II., on Natural Theology. These two volumes contain the Bridgewater Treatise; besides which, about one half of them consists of original matter.

Vols. III. and IV., on the Miraculous and Internal Evidences of the Christian Revelation, and the Authority of its Records. These two volumes contain the whole of Dr. Chalmers' former work on the Evidences of Christianity; besides which, as will be seen from the contents, about three-fourths of them consist of entirely new matter.

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Reply to the Memorial of A. Whyte and others, by Synod's Committee.

THE second specification of grievance by the memorialists is the case of Dr. A. Bullions. In handling this point they charge the Presbytery of Cambridge with "eagerness to criminate, uncharitableness, harshness, cruelty, high-handed and unscrupulous violation of established rules, and with haste and eagerness to devour." We think it will occur to the judicious reader, that in the whole memorial, and as much in this as in any part of it, the memorialists show a spirit unbecoming the cause of truth, and very unfavourable to a fair representation of facts. Confident assertions of the motives by which the Presbytery were governed constitute a large part of their narrative. Where a bad motive could be assigned, they assign it unhesitatingly, as where a good one was obvious. They represent Dr. A. Bullions as the innocent "*victim*," and the Presbytery as actuated by nothing less than malicious rage and unrelenting hatred. Surely charity could have put other constructions on the conduct of the Presbytery, even if the tangible facts had been as the memorialists represent them. But while they profess to give a simple history of the case, they mingle with some truths many reflections not only uncharitable, but utterly unjust, and many misrepresentations both of rules of discipline and of historic facts. The very first sentence of their history contains a misrepresentation. They say "Mr. Stalker was defendant, and Messrs. Miller and Anderson complainants," before the Presbytery, Oct. 5, 1837. Precisely the reverse of this is the truth. Mr. Stalker was complainant, and Messrs. Miller and Anderson defendants. This may appear a trifling error, but there is evidence that it was designed; because, as they charge the present members of Presbytery with "eagerness to criminate," this statement would swell their list of evidences on this point; and because the true state of the case was so well known to them that they could scarcely fall into the error by inadvertence. And that they did know the truth in this case we see by referring to their own organ, the Associate Presbyterian Magazine, Vol. I., p. 37, in which they say, in speaking on this very point, "As their (Messrs. Miller and Anderson's) testimony contained several statements respecting Mr. Stalker which he believed to be false, he thought it his duty to lay in a complaint against them." Again, the very next sentence in their history is also a misrepresentation, in which they represent Mr. Miller as making a charge of an *improper connexion* between Dr. Bullions and Mr. Stalker, which he could not prove. Mr. Miller, indeed, objected to Dr. Bullions' sitting on the trial of Mr. Stalker's complaint, and the ground of the objection was simply this:—A statement on which Dr. Bullions, about three years before, had rested his defence in Synod against the Presbytery in a certain case, was the very thing which Mr. Stalker, in this trial, wished to prove against Messrs. Miller and Anderson. This was the connexion alleged by Mr. Miller, which they call an "*accusation*." But, not to follow the memorialists in the order of their misrepresentations, which would produce prolixity and repetition, we shall notice the prominent points of the case in question, and correct those misstatements which are most calculated to lead the reader into error. To give a minute history of the whole procedure, with all the ne-

cessary refutations of errors in the memorial, would swell this article to an undue length. And as the Presbytery of Cambridge have published a documentary history of the case, we shall refer those who wish to see the documents on which our statements are based, to that publication, copies of which may be found in most of the sections of our church, and a number more can be furnished to those who wish them. The history given by the memorialists, though in many points false, we shall take as the order of our remarks, and admit or correct as truth may require.

We shall at present state as prominent facts, that on the 5th of October, 1837, Dr. A. Bullions, for certain offences then committed in the presence of the Presbytery of Cambridge, was first ordered to be rebuked; and not submitting to this censure, but persevering impenitently in the offences charged against him, was suspended from the exercise of the ministry and the communion of the church till he give evidence of repentance. And for persevering in these offences, and for other grounds of charge found against him in the progress of his case, he was at length deposed from the office of the holy ministry, on the 12th of April, 1838. And this decision was confirmed by Synod. We shall now advert to the grounds of these decisions. The memorialists represent that one ground of these sentences was a mere insinuation; and again that it was for "a few words unadvisedly, and, it may be, improperly spoken," that Dr. B. was censured; and again, that "this is the whole of the original offence." It is true that Presbytery, to their own injury before the public, did at first make a defective minute of what occurred, which they afterwards amended, as it is admitted courts have a right to do. But though the minute was at first defective, Dr. B. perfectly understood what Presbytery intended. They had his words recorded, though they called them an insinuation, meaning that he insinuated that he believed the reports to which he referred to be true. Dr. B. knew what words they had recorded, and knew that they held them to be his words; and this he admitted, both in his speeches and in writing to the Presbytery, till by an after thought it occurred to him that he could quibble on the minute. This is manifest by his admitting at one time that he spake the words deliberately which they had recorded and charged against him; again denied that he had used the words which they attributed to him; and again admitted that he had uttered them, and regretted it. Let this suffice for the quibble about the insinuation. The state of the matter was this:—On the 5th of October, 1837, when Presbytery were engaged in the trial of a weighty case, Dr. Bullions proposed that it should be postponed till a fuller meeting of Presbytery. As none seconded his proposal, he repeated it, and urged it with this reason, "that if reports were true, there were some members of this Presbytery not fit to sit in any court." These are the words which the memorialists call "a few words unadvisedly spoken," and "the whole of the original offence." Thus treating the expression as a light matter. But what heavier charge could well be brought against members of Presbytery? Let it be remembered that Dr. B. made this statement as a bar to further progress in Presbytery; and by making it for this purpose, he insinuated his belief that the reports were true. And if this allegation were a bar, as he proposed it, to further progress at the time, it would be a legal

bar to their sitting in Presbytery on any business, and must remain so till the charge be tried. Had they passed this charge without demanding an investigation, it would have been strengthened by their silence, suspicion would have rested on them as guilty, and the mouths of defamers have been opened to reproach them with impunity. On what ground could this be counted a light matter, except on the ground that the person making the charge, as a bar to procedure in Presbytery, was too insignificant, or too notorious for lying, to be worthy of notice. As the memorialists would not admit this of Dr. B., so to count it still a light matter, and unworthy of prosecution, must forfeit their claim either to ordinary intelligence or to a good conscience.

But, after all, it was not for these words spoken, nor yet for the manner in which the charge was laid in to Presbytery, that Dr. B. was censured. This was not "the whole of the original offence." It was not for what Dr. B. *said* that he was censured, but for his refusal to do that which became his duty in consequence of having said it. And unless the reader will advert to this point, and give the truth its due weight here, he will seriously mistake the case, and do serious injustice both to Presbytery and Synod. Therefore, we repeat that Dr. B. was not censured simply for the words which he uttered, nor for the manner in which he introduced them, but for refusing what the rules of discipline, ordinary practice, and common sense say he was imperiously bound to do, when he had laid in a serious charge, namely, to furnish the means of investigating the charge, by naming the persons charged, specifying the things reported, and furnishing such proof as he had relied on in giving in the information; or, which the Presbytery would have accepted as substantially the same thing, that as he had intimated the reports were in writing, he should furnish those written reports. Had Dr. B. agreed to furnish the means of investigating the charge included in his words before the Presbytery, instead of censuring him, they would have thanked him for the information; and on furnishing those means, if he should not be found a participant in the slanderous reports to which he had referred, they would have dismissed him with approbation instead of censure. And these demands and purposes were most distinctly and repeatedly made. And his compliance with these demands Dr. B. well knew were due to Presbytery; and his dismissal on those conditions he as well knew would be due to himself. It must be presumed that there is no minister of the Associate Church ignorant of these rules, or of the necessity of them. When Dr. B. laid in his charge, some one of the following things must be done. The members must sit in Presbytery, and act under this weighty charge, made by one of their number as a bar to further procedure, as though nothing had been said; or they must hold themselves disqualified to sit in Presbytery, or to discharge any part of the ministry, as long as Dr. B. is pleased to conceal the names, specifications, and proofs, in violation of established rules, and in disobedience to the demands of Presbytery that he should comply with them; or he must obey the rule, and furnish the means of investigation; or he must be censured, suspended, or cast out of the church as unworthy of her fellowship. Who would seriously say that either of the first two measures should be adopted? And, though Presbytery is charged with severity, we ask what pos-

sible difficulty could it be to Dr. Bullions, on supposition that he was an honest man, to comply with that necessary rule of discipline which the Presbytery demanded that he should obey? And if a compliance with this rule would have exposed him as a guilty or a base author of false and slanderous reports, was it cruel in Presbytery to require his compliance nevertheless? The sympathy which would either justify or screen a man in such a case is not to be commended, nor even excused. But some say that Presbytery did not give Dr. B. time to furnish the means of investigating the reports to which he referred. We reply, he asked no time, but absolutely refused to furnish the means. Presbytery wished to inflict no censure on him; they laboured with him to induce him to compliance with the rule, and would have given him all reasonable time, had he consented to the measure; but all was to no purpose. And he had weeks and months afterwards, under suspension, to comply and be restored, but he did not embrace the opportunity.

Out of these matters, however, arose another ground of censure. Dr. B., finding that Presbytery were inflexible in their demand, that he should furnish the means of investigating the reports to which he had referred, and knowing the justice of their demand, he chose to escape by denying his own words, in which he had laid in the charge. Had he, at this stage of the business, determined to do what he afterwards, when too late, actually did, however faulty in his case, it would have effected his escape with a lighter censure; that is, to retract his expressions as unfounded and slanderous. Instead of this, he chose to deny, not merely his consciousness of having uttered the words attributed to him, but the utterance of the words at all. Here the memorialists blame the Presbytery for making this denial a ground of censure, and plead that it should even have acquitted him. It is true there are cases in which people mistake one another's words, and where a mistake is possible, the matter should not be urged too pressingly against denials; but there are cases in which the matter is so unquestionable, that to deny and to claim credit to the denial is to demand of people to do violence to their senses, and amounts to a charge against them of lying; and this case was one of the latter class, as will appear by the following statements. Dr. B. uttered his words before the Presbytery: when the Presbytery charged him with them, he did not deny them, and no one of his friends in Presbytery then denied them for him. One of his friends apologized for him as having spoken perhaps rashly, and uttered more than he intended; he replied that he had spoken deliberately. Some time after this he denied them in an answer to Presbytery's demand to furnish the means of investigating the reports. And to show the justice of Presbytery in holding his denial censurable, we may now state that in the afternoon of the same day, when Presbytery were about passing the sentence of suspension for this with other offences, he arose, repeated substantially the words which Presbytery had recorded against him, and asserted that these were the words which he had uttered in the morning. These words, too, were afterwards taken down in the minutes of Presbytery.

Another ground of charge accompanying the denial of his words was, when Presbytery proposed to censure Dr. B. because he would not furnish the means of investigating those reports, he replied that "they might censure him till they were tired;" thus not only abso-

lutely refusing to comply with a necessary rule of discipline, but showing open contempt for Presbytery's demand, for their censure, and for their lenity in dealing so long with him in order to induce him to perform that necessary part of his duty, and that they might not be under the necessity of censuring him.

But the memorialists represent Presbytery as cruelly silencing Dr. B. while he was insisting that the words imputed to him did not convey his meaning, and then charging him with denying his own words and voting a rebuke. This misrepresents the order of procedure, and consequently the whole case. The order was this: a motion was made to censure Dr. B. for refusing to furnish the means of investigating the reports which he had laid in to Presbytery, and for his denial of his words and for contempt of Presbytery. On this motion he had spoken often, and with turbulence was protracting the business of Presbytery, interrupting the members, and disobeying the orders of the moderator. According to an established rule he was silenced for that sitting, and then the motion under debate was put to vote, and carried, that he should be censured; it was also decided that the censure should be a rebuke; but the execution of that sentence was postponed till the silence should be removed.

The memorialists further say that the Presbytery required Dr. B. to submit to a rebuke while he had a protest against it, and by this deed violated the rules of protests. This is not true. When Presbytery required him to submit to the rebuke, he had no protest against it. The protest which preceded this requisition was against a minister of Presbytery recording his words; but when he protested against the infliction of the rebuke, they desisted from this requisition, and proposed and voted his suspension.

But the memorialists say that Presbytery suspended him, and indeed inflicted all their heavy censures on him, for refusal to submit to a rebuke, and for protesting and appealing to Synod. This is utterly false and highly slanderous. They, indeed, took his protest as evidence that he did not submit to the rebuke, and all this as evidence that he was persevering in all that conduct for which the censure was voted; he was therefore suspended on those grounds on which they had voted a rebuke. And here let it be distinctly noticed what those charges or grounds of censure were: Not simply uttering the words which called forth those proceedings, but his refusing the necessary means of investigating the charge which he had laid in, thus making himself responsible for the slanders to which he had referred; for a declaration against character unsupported must be held as a slander; his denial of the words uttered by him, contrary to the assured knowledge of Presbytery, and his own declaration that he had spoken them deliberately, after they were several times stated in Presbytery; and his expressed contempt for their censures.

The memorialists also say that Dr. B. strenuously asserted that he did not intend to convey the idea expressed by the words attributed to him, and that this disavowal of intention should have been sufficient for his acquittal. But would this be admitted as sufficient in ordinary affairs? Under such a disavowal it is necessary that the person state what he did mean. This Dr. B. did not; he left the

words unexplained, bearing only one unequivocal meaning, viz: That the business of Presbytery should be postponed because some of the members, according to reports, were not fit to sit in any court. Besides, instead of explaining his meaning, he arose, after a motion was made for his suspension, and repeated substantially the words with which Presbytery had charged him, and asserted that these were the words which he had uttered in the morning; moreover, he then gave the names of the persons charged in the reports, and added that the charges were error in doctrine and immorality in practice. But still he refused to specify those charges so that they could be tried. Thus he renewed his assertions with which Presbytery charged him, although he had denied them. He did not retract his words as false; he did not confess his guilt in denying those words which he had now confirmed; he did not at all explain his meaning to be any thing else than what Presbytery charged him with; he did not retract his contemptuous expressions of Presbytery's censure, nor did he consent to comply with the demand of Presbytery that he should furnish the means of investigating the charges in those reports—Therefore the Presbytery suspended him.

Under the proceedings thus far, Dr. B. offered all the protests which he offered in his case in Presbytery. The first was against the Presbytery's record of his words, which was evidently offered for the purpose of postponing his own case, of gaining time, and that he might compel the members of Presbytery to lie under his charge, without redress, for about eight months at least. The second protest was against the execution of the sentence of rebuke, and the third was against the sentence of suspension. Presbytery admitted none of these as an arrest of procedure, but admitted them all as far as was necessary to bring his case before Synod. Here the memorialists complain loudly of Presbytery in refusing these protests and not allowing them to stay all further procedure, and allege that Presbytery acted tyrannically, deprived Dr. B. of his right of appeal, and violated all the rules of discipline on the subject. But in reply, we ask, Did these measures of Presbytery deprive Dr. B. of his privilege of appeal, or of redress in Synod? They did not; they had no tendency to do so; and they were not intended by Presbytery to have this effect. The manner in which they were admitted, allowed all this privilege fully. But as this privilege was left uninjured, it appears that the great cause of grievance was that Presbytery did not allow the protests to stay process; this is the complaint in page 7th of the memorial. The amount of which is, that Dr. B. should have escaped trial and censure, and held his brethren under a slanderous charge with impunity for eight months; that all this suspension of government on the part of Presbytery and continuance in open sin on the part of Dr. B., should be allowed on his judgment or will, and that the court should have no judgment in, nor control of the matter: and that a Presbytery should have no power over litigious members, who corrupt or disturb the church, but that the whole power exclusively is lodged in the Synod.

Whether the memorialists will subscribe these doctrines we know not, but it is evident they are implied in their pleadings. But they say that Presbytery's refusal to admit Dr. B's. protests, and to sist, (or stay) procedure, is contrary to all the rules of discipline with

which they are acquainted. To answer this, let the reader turn to the Book of Discipline of the Associate Church of North America, pages 60, 61, where he will find the following: "When a protest and appeal is offered, the judicatory is to consider whether they will admit or reject them." If they admit, the cause is to be left to the judgment of the Superior Court; but if they reject, they may proceed in the trial of it. The party may protest against the rejection of his protest; and if this is sustained, he may still bring the cause ultimately before the Superior Court." Here is the very rule which the Presbytery followed. Now, if even this rule were unjust, why should the memorialists say that Presbytery's conduct was a violation of all rules of discipline? and why should Presbytery be censured for following both the letter and spirit of the rule? It is contrary to law and custom, civil and ecclesiastic, to censure a person, or a court for a deed which was done according to a known and an admitted law. But is this rule unjust? It was adopted by the church when under no exciting questions about it. Neither the memorialists, nor others, as far as we know, had ever complained of it, till it was found to bear hard on Dr. B's. will and on his violations of order. This rule is both just and necessary, because a man's crimes may be so gross and notorious, that the law of God and the interests of the church will not allow certain steps of discipline to be deferred; and the court, and not the offender, is by law and reason the proper judge on this matter. It is, therefore, necessary that the court have power to proceed to those steps, without being under the control of the accused, while his privilege of ultimate redress by appeal to the superior court is allowed him. And these were precisely the circumstances under which this case was conducted. The first protest by Dr. B., which was against Presbytery's record of his words, was inadmissible as an arrest of procedure, because it was on a point which properly belonged to the Presbytery alone to decide; that is the fact of what transpired before them, and of what they heard with their own ears; and because an arrest of procedure at this stage of the business was utterly inadmissible. And this consideration that the arrest of procedure was inadmissible, applies equally to all the protests; because it was inadmissible that a member of Presbytery, who had laid in a charge against his brethren of the same Presbytery, as an arrest to all procedure in the court, and as a disqualification of them to act as members of it, till the charge should be investigated, and while he, contrary to all acknowledged rules of discipline, inflexibly and contemptuously refused to furnish the means of investigating his charge, should, in the mean time, retain his standing and the exercise of his office with the Presbytery. It will not be necessary to burden this paper with a quotation of rules of discipline in support of the above remarks, nor to show that the trial of a charge against ministers or church members, is not to be delayed unnecessarily, or that he that lays in a charge by libel or information is bound to support what he asserts, under the penalty of being counted and treated as a slanderer if he fail or refuse. But we might here ask, was it unreasonable or hard that the members charged by Dr. B. should demand a trial? or was it cruel or unreasonable that Presbytery should demand inflexibly that he should furnish the means, within his reach,

of trying the reports which he had alleged as a disqualification of those members for sitting in Presbytery? or that they should refuse to suffer his protests to interpose a long delay? These questions we leave with the reader.

On the 9th page, and elsewhere, the memorialists allege that Dr. B's. protests gave him liberty to preach notwithstanding the decision of Presbytery suspending him; and this is often asserted by them to belong to the power of a protest. It would have been well if they had quoted a rule of discipline to prove this, if there be one to this purpose. We know of none. But we know that it is not allowed to the private church member, appealing from a sentence of suspension by a session, to take his privilege at the communion table in virtue of his protest. And Pardoan, Book IV. Tit. V. § 11, says, that appeals "have not a suspending but a devolving effect only:" that is, they refer the final decision to the superior court, but do not, in the mean time, suspend the operation of the decision passed and appealed from. And with this agrees the Book of Discipline of the General Assembly Presbyterian Church in the United States, page 414, which says, "if a sentence of suspension or excommunication from church privileges, or of deposition from office, be the sentence appealed from, it shall be considered as in force until the appeal shall be issued." It is granted these are cases in which it will be proper for a church court to allow a minister to preach under his protest and appeal, but then this privilege is not by the intrinsic power of the protest, but by liberty granted by the court appealed from. Just as on the question of a protest staying further process, so on this question of suspending the sentence appealed from, it belongs to the court and not the individual to judge of its propriety. Therefore Dr. B. had no right by his protest to exercise his ministry in the Associate Church while the Presbytery held him under suspension.

The memorialists refer to a paper that Dr. B. sent into the Presbytery on the next day after his suspension, declaring by an informal oath, that the language attributed to him did not convey the meaning that he intended; that he regarded it as improper, disclaimed it, and that if it had been used by him he expressed his sincere regret for having uttered it; and they allege that this was a "full and humble acknowledgment" that should have satisfied the Presbytery and effected the removal of the suspension. But wherein was it a full acknowledgment which should have satisfied the Presbytery? Did he not here deny that he used the words which they knew he said, and which after denial he again repeated, and asserted himself that he had used them? or in denying that the language attributed to him conveyed the idea which he intended, did he give any meaning which he had intended? or did he retract the words as untrue? He did none of these. He left the words which he had used unretracted and unexplained; and so he himself or others might afterwards refer to them as charges which the Presbytery still lay under. And for what did he here express his regret even conditionally? It was for using *those words*. But this was not the thing asked by Presbytery; this was entirely aside from the matter on hand. Presbytery did not censure him for using the words, but for refusing the means of investigating the charge which by those words

he laid in before them. Had he expressed his regret for this refusal, and now in proof of his penitence, had furnished those means or engaged to do it, Presbytery would cheerfully have entered on the consideration of removing his suspension, believing that consistency would now lead him to give satisfaction for his other offences. The memorialists appear to be surprised that Presbytery should find a censurable offence in this paper of Dr. B's. But we shall not here wait to argue the sinfulness of an *uncalled* for appeal to God in confirmation of our words.

On a request by the Associate Congregation of Cambridge, and with a hope expressed by them that Dr. B. would give satisfaction for his offences, a meeting of Presbytery was called at Cambridge on the 14th of November following. At this meeting Dr. B. was heard on the matters between him and Presbytery. But as he justified himself and refused to acknowledge the faults with which he was charged, and to furnish the means of investigating the reports to which he had referred in his charge, Presbytery decided that he had not given satisfaction in order to the removal of his suspension. He now complained that he knew not what Presbytery wanted. Although Presbytery considered that the grounds of the censure passed on him indicated plainly enough what satisfaction was required, they judged it proper, in answer to his complaint, to draw up their demand more definitely. Accordingly, they prepared and adopted seven requisitions including all their demands in the case, in which they included expressly the demand made from the first—that he should furnish the reports to which he had referred, or the means of investigating the charges in them—that he should confess his sin in denying his words—acknowledge the sinfulness of bringing heavy charges against his brethren on report while he would not furnish the means of trying them—acknowledge the sinfulness of the contempt of court with which he was charged—and that with these submissions, he should withdraw his protests as evidence of his repentance and of his return to his duty, and submit to the rebuke adjudged, for what he had done. Though Presbytery drew these up in answer to Dr. B's. complaint of not knowing what they wanted, and in order that, by being definite, all misunderstandings might be removed, the memorialists make this measure a ground of bitter complaint; they call these requisitions *severe and Jesuitical*. If the least that can be demanded in faithful discipline be severe, these were severe; and if plainness in matter and design be Jesuitical, then these were Jesuitical. They also say, these requisitions were so drawn that to make the acknowledgments required would have degraded Dr. B's. character. We reply, a man may degrade himself by his conduct, but the confession of a fault, known and proved, is not degrading, except in the eyes of the men of the world, who discard conscience and the law of God, and very seldom even with them. And nothing that Presbytery demanded of Dr. B. would have been half so degrading as what he did stoop to at this meeting, without necessity, and contrary to the expectation and wishes of the Presbytery in answer to one of their requisitions. One of these, numbered the 5th, which required him to furnish the reports, to which he had referred, for investigation, and for the trial of the members charged, was put to him at this meeting, in order

that Presbytery might know what further measures to adopt. To the astonishment of Presbytery, in answer to this, he retracted what he had said about these reports as unfounded and slanderous, and so he refused to furnish the reports. It is true Presbytery gave him his choice to retract what he had said or to furnish the reports, as the only alternatives that order and discipline allowed in such cases; and they did so in order to show clearly his obligations to do the latter. But they had not the smallest desire, nor the most distant idea that he would make himself a liar and slanderer, when to furnish the reports was not only his duty but perfectly easy and honourable to an honest man. It cannot be pleaded in his behalf that truth required him to make this retraction, for the reports to which he had referred, did exist, and he knew it, and they were then under his control. The pressure on his mind inducing him to correct the reports, must have been very great, when he would do it at such a sacrifice. The reason, however, was afterwards developed. The other requisitions Presbytery did not put to him at this meeting, but deferred them till December 6th, ensuing. This, the memorialists say, was without any necessity and apparently to prolong suffering. The necessity was this. At this meeting, Dr. B. had justified himself on these points and refused all satisfaction. What probability, then, was there that he would, in answer to these requisitions at this meeting, make the required confessions? or if he did, that he would have done it with sufficient evidence of sincerity?

At the next meeting of Presbytery, December 6th, Dr. B. gave in written answers to all the requisitions, except the fifth, which he had answered at the preceding meeting. In these, he renewed his denial of his words which he had several times denied and acknowledged, and refused satisfaction for his offences. Presbytery, therefore, decided that his answers were not satisfactory, and so left him under suspension. It should be observed here, that Presbytery dealt much with him to induce him to comply with their necessary requisitions, earnestly desirous to have him restored, but without effect. At this stage of the business we may again refer to the complaint that Presbytery should have accepted Dr. B's denial of his words as satisfactory. We have already seen that Dr. B. uttered his words before Presbytery; neither he nor any of his friends at first objected to the record which was made of them: in answer to an apology offered for him by a friend in Presbytery, he said he had spoken the words deliberately: afterwards, he strenuously denied them for a time; again he repeated them on the same day, and asserted that they were the words which he used in the morning. The next day, in a paper given in, he denied them. Again, in November 14th, he acknowledged them by retracting them as unfounded and slanderous. Again, December 6th, in his answers to several of Presbytery's requisitions, he denied them; and yet at the same meeting he professed his sorrow for his sin in uttering them; and in a paper which he handed in at that meeting, but was not accepted by Presbytery, yet preserved in the Associate Presbyterian Magazine, Vol. I., page 48, he says, "My answer to the fifth (requisition) was, and I still adhere to it, that I had no sooner uttered the language charged, than I was convinced that it was

wrong, and I am sorry for it and retract it." The question now might be,—Which of Dr. B's. contrary statements are we to believe?—his acknowledgment or his denial of the words attributed to him? Is it unreasonable to take the testimony of the Presbytery for decision between them? And was not the Presbytery, under these circumstances, excusable in standing by their record of his words, and insisting on his confession of sin in denying them?

But it is said, since Dr. B. retracted his expressions as unfounded slanders, why did not Presbytery now accept of this as satisfactory? We reply, that though this might have been accepted at first, there were now other things on which he did not give satisfaction, and which had occurred in connexion with his offensive expressions,—as his denial of his words—his contemptuous language to Presbytery respecting their censures—his refusal to submit to a rebuke from consciousness of guilt which was now manifestly his duty according to the retraction which he made—and his refusal to withdraw his protests, which, according to his retraction, were now useless, and the proof of impenitence. Besides, his retraction was now too late to be satisfactory, for by following his own indications to Presbytery, it was found that such reports as he had spoken of, were actually in existence, and were in writing where he had pointed them out; particularly with the Rev. George Mairs. But it may be said, that Presbytery had now found the reports themselves, and why then continue their demand on Dr. B. to furnish them? We reply, Mr. Mairs, with whom they were found, though he acknowledged they were in his hand, in writing, and that they were of the character in general which Dr. B. had given of them, yet refused to show them, and said, that on account of friendship between Dr. B. and himself, he would not be a witness in the case before Presbytery. Thus it appeared, not only that Dr. B., having laid in the charge, was bound to prove it, but that he had, at that time, the evidence entirely under his control. Nothing, therefore, could be satisfactory, under these circumstances, but his furnishing the means of the investigation of those reports, that the members charged might either be found guilty, and censured, or openly acquitted on trial.

At the meeting of Presbytery, in Cambridge, November 14th, 1837, Messrs. T. Goodwillie, Wm. Pringle and A. Whyte were, by vote, excluded from seats in Dr. B's. case; all of them on account of alleged partiality, and the two former also on account of affinity to him; the one being a brother-in-law, and the other a son-in-law. Much is said by the memorialists, and in very strong language, against this step; and much use of it is made in the memorial and elsewhere to excite prejudice against the Presbytery. The partiality of all the three members had been very obvious, and frequently manifested. For many years none of them had attended a meeting of Presbytery except when Dr. B. was on trial, not even when they were in the vicinity of the meeting, but always, though at great inconvenience, attending at his call, and always voting his acquittal, even when the evidence was conclusive against him. They all have uniformly showed themselves to be under Dr. B's. influence, and to be utterly disqualified to give a correct vote if it would operate against them. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to go into further detail of the evidences of their partiality. The Presbytery were the proper

judges of this matter. Or if the members excluded from seats, or those aggrieved by the deed, had thought the Presbytery not the proper judges in the case, they might have appealed to Synod; but they did not carry it up by appeal; or if they had thought the allegation unjust, they could have objected, and denied partiality, and so have put the allegation to a more formal trial, but they did not; the whole matter was permitted to be carried against their having seats, by objection and vote. It is alleged by the memorialists that all this was done "*without a trial*." This is false; the objection was tried, and tried as fully as it was asked. Again, they say that all this was done without offence being given or alleged. We reply—If by this expression they mean that no evidence of partiality was alleged in the objection made to those members sitting on the case, it is false; the grounds of this objection were both stated and recorded, and Presbytery gave their judgment both of the fact of these grounds and of the strength of them. But if they mean that no charge was brought against the persons objected to in order to their censure, it is sufficient to say, that whatever crime there may be in partiality, it is never charged as a ground of censure in merely objecting to a person's sitting on a particular case, nor is his exclusion on this ground ever considered a censure. And an objection on the ground of affinity is surely not a charge that affinity is not a crime or an offence. The memorialists say that such a "proceeding has never had a parallel in any church," and they "*confidently assert*" it. Now we presume they knew that Mr. Fisher was excluded from a vote in E. Erskine's case, on account of affinity. And though we do not account the courts of the church of Scotland at that time a good authority in all their proceedings, yet they might be right in this; and neither Fisher, nor E. Erskine, nor any of their associates complained of it. They submitted to it as a rule of the church and as reasonable. Again, the memorialists speak of this deed of Presbytery not only as "unparalleled," but as a "daring outrage" and "dishonourable" to Presbytery. Those who are not acquainted with such matters will be ready to say, Surely from such strange language, we must suppose the deed of Presbytery in this affair, must be a novelty, and without any rule or precedent. Yet we presume that few are so ignorant of civil courts as not to know that they uniformly act on the same principle as the Presbytery did. And have any complained of this as an *outrage on rules and on the feelings and rights* of jurors, or as *dishonourable* to a court? Would any yet complain if a civil court should exclude from the jury a man related to a party by affinity, or who had given evidence of partiality to a party by prejudging or otherwise? And if reason and justice require such exclusion in civil courts, why not in ecclesiastical? It is argued, we know, that ministers are engaged by their Christian profession, and their oath of office, to be impartial. True; and so are Christian jurors in a civilized court, but sad experience teaches that obligation does not secure impartiality, nor can it exempt from punishment those who violate it as many do. But notwithstanding the strong language of the memorial maintaining that this measure was an "outrage on the rules and usages of the Associate Church," Pardovan, an acknowledged authority, says, Book IV., Tit. V. § 9: "There is a warrantable declinature which may be made against particular members who are related to the party

by consanguinity or affinity nearer than a cousin-german, or who have behaved themselves as parties in the cause." Thus as an individual may decline the action of a court in his case, if any of the members of the court are liable to the above objections, so the court may take away the ground of that declinature by excluding such members from a seat in that particular cause. The Book of Discipline of the Associate Church, page 50, speaking of witnesses, says, "malice, personal interest, partial counsel—if proved, are relevant objections." And will reason allow that these are valid objections to witnesses, and not also to judges? It is objected by some that there is no scripture authority for such a measure as the Presbytery here adopted. We reply, *express* scripture authority is not to be expected for every thing that reason necessarily declares, and which is necessarily inferrible from express scripture rules. But the divine law commanding *righteous judgment*, and forbidding *partiality*, lays a sufficient ground for excluding those that are partial; and the exclusion of those who are closely related to a party by affinity may be inferred from the law which provides that a man may not be a judge in his own case. We close this subject with two remarks. 1. If the measure in question be unjust in itself, which we cannot allow, yet, why should a court be censured, and held up to reproach for acting according to the rules laid down for their action, and rules of long standing, and never objected to before? If the measure be unjust, let the rule approving of it be first condemned and set aside, excusing at least past obedience to it, and forbidding such obedience in time to come. 2. Who will be willing, after all the reproach cast on the Presbytery of Cambridge, to allow a member related by affinity, or who has manifested partiality to his opponent in a trial, to sit as judge on his case in either a civil or ecclesiastical court? Are not church courts, as well as civil, bound to take care that causes of partial or unrighteous judgment be removed?

At the next meeting of Presbytery, Mr. Stalker was also excluded from a seat in Dr. B's trial. Of this the memorialists speak, in much the same manner as of the other cases of exclusion. We need not travel over the same ground of argument or correction; but only notice one misrepresentation peculiar to this case. They say that Mr. Stalker was thrust from his seat "for having spoken in opposition to the course of Presbytery in the case of Dr. B." We correct, by saying, that Mr. Stalker was excluded because he had prejudged Dr. B's case, as appeared by a paper given in to Presbytery by him, in which, at an early stage of the trial, he declared that he would not submit to the decision of Presbytery if it should be against Dr. B. We suppose few would be so hardy as to say that a man in such a state of mind was likely to be a just and impartial judge; or that the exclusion of such a man was unfavourable to just and impartial decision. The memorialists say that the Presbytery, by those exclusions, was vitiated. It is granted that this would have been the case if those who had a right to vote had been excluded, and the character of Presbytery's decision by these means been changed. But we have seen that none were excluded who had a right to a seat; and we may add, that the decisions of Presbytery would have been vitiated by allowing the votes of those to rule who were excluded. At the next meeting of Presbytery, February

7, 1838, Dr. B. sent in, what the memorialists call a "respectful declinature." To show whether it deserves the epithet "respectful," we offer the following extracts from it: "The subscriber, (A. Bullions,) while fully satisfied that whatever a *lawful court of Christ* binds on earth is bound in heaven—declines all submission, not to the Associate Presbytery of Cambridge, but to the *minority claiming* to be that Presbytery. The undersigned cannot acknowledge the *fragment* that remained as that Presbytery. The undersigned appeals from the above enumerated deeds of the minority of the ministerial members of the Presbytery of Cambridge, *claiming* to be that Presbytery, and acting as such, and declines their *assumed* authority, and holds all their past acts in his case as *null and void*, and will hold *null and void all future acts* they may pass affecting his ministerial standing, interfering with his labours, or intruding on his privileges." On the question whether this was *respectful*, these extracts speak with sufficient plainness. But the memorialists say, that by this declinature, according to "the rules of Presbyterian church government, the whole matter was now regularly taken out of the hands of the Presbytery." These rules should have been produced; for all the rules with which we are acquainted maintain the reverse. Pardovan, Book IV., Tit. V., § 9, speaks of two sorts of declinatures, the warrantable and unwarrantable, and says, "The unwarrantable declinature is, when a judicatory is declined as *having no authority*, as if a minister should decline his own Presbytery, or the other superior judicatories of the church to be his *lawful judges*, which is a higher degree of contumacy than that which follows upon non-compearance, and may be warrantably censured with deposition." Now let the reader compare the extract from Dr. B's declinature, given above, with this definition, and he will see that it contains the very characteristic of the unwarrantable declinature, as it is here defined by Pardovan. Dr. B. calls the authority of the Associate Presbytery of Cambridge, an *assumed authority*, he *declines their authority*, and while he acknowledges that the deeds of a *lawful court of Christ* are bound in heaven, he *declines all submission* to those claiming to be the Associate Presbytery of Cambridge; thus denying them to be a *lawful court of Christ*, and so to be his *lawful judges*. A warrantable declinature is entirely different from this. It is of the same nature as an appeal, except that an appeal is made from a sentence past, while a declinature is made before the deed of the court is passed, and on grounds consistent with acknowledging the authority of the court declined. The memorialists confound all this distinction between a warrantable and an unwarrantable declinature. Dr. B's declinature being most fully and clearly of the unwarrantable kind, let it be observed that the rule quoted declares it to be a high degree of contumacy, and even warranting deposition; and so we see the Presbytery were justified in counting it a renewed expression of contempt, although the memorialists infer that the "Presbytery think that rules were not made for them." And even if this rule were unjust, why should the Presbytery be condemned for observing a rule of acknowledged obligation, till it was shown to be unjust and repealed? But the memorialists seem to suppose that any declinature, or any appeal takes the whole matter out of the hands of the Presbytery at the option or will of the person declining or appealing. On this suppo-

sition, the most grossly immoral, and vile conduct must pass uncensured at the will of the transgressor, and divine ordinances be openly profaned under the inspection of a Presbytery and in their fellowship. Every one must see that this is inadmissible, and that it must be left with the court in the mean time to judge whether to admit an appeal or even a declinature, lawful in its terms, to stay all process. Presbytery did, therefore, judge the declinature of Dr. B. a renewed expression of contempt, and they warned him to appear and answer for it as well as to the former charges against him at their next meeting.

The memorialists insist that Dr. B's declinature, which we see was unwarrantable and censurable, justified his absence from any further trial before Presbytery, and bound them to desist. Here we see the very worst use made of it which we have supposed might be made; a man screening himself from trial and censure under heinous crimes, and making his own contumacy his screen. New developments of Dr. B's conduct occurred about the time of his first declinature, and as he had an early hint of them, it is quite probable this prompted him to give in the declinature in order to their longer concealment. Indeed, we have been assured on unquestionable authority that he earnestly wished the ensuing meeting of Synod to pass before these new matters should be investigated. The memorialists, however, ingenious to find out bad motives to which they might impute the conduct of Presbytery, allege that they took up this new case for the purpose of averting the storm of public indignation which their measures had raised. But the attention of Presbytery was called to these developments as connected with the cause pending before them against Dr. B., and cast much light on the expressions charged against him. They purported that he was himself the author in the form of anonymous letters of the very reports to which he had referred in Presbytery, and on which he had charged some members as not fit to sit in any court, or that he had such a connexion with them as to render him responsible for them. And if this were a fact, it accounted for his great reluctance to bring the reports to which he had referred before Presbytery for investigation, and also for his denial at one time of his words, and again acknowledging them and regretting that he had uttered them, and again, when such regrets did not acquit him, denying that he had uttered them. But as this makes an important part of Dr. B's case before Presbytery and Synod, and as the memorialists use strong language on this subject, acquitting him and censuring Presbytery, it will be necessary to set it forth with some distinctness and particularity.

It is admitted that Dr. B. was charged by Presbytery, not in the form that the memorialists say, but "with making himself responsible for anonymous slanderous letters against his brethren of the Presbytery, by writing, causing to be written, publishing or commending them;" and that he was cited to appear before Presbytery to answer to this, with the other charges against him, on April 10th, and again on April 12th, 1838, with certification that if he did not attend, they would proceed to decide on his case as though he were present. It is admitted, too, that Dr. B. was absent from the whole trial of this point; that he assured Presbytery on the 10th of April, by a renewal of his declinature that he would not attend; and

that they did decide on the case and find him guilty in his absence. Though the rules of discipline fully justify the Presbytery in these steps, yet the memorialists censure them severely, and seem determined to dispute every inch of the ground even with assurance of defeat at last, so that they may for a time create a prejudice against the Presbytery and Synod and in favour of themselves; and unhappily they have too much success, because many have but little knowledge of the rules of discipline and of the nature and necessity of them. We have already seen that Dr. B's declinature was unlawful and censurable in itself; and that it did not justify his absence from Presbytery, nor lay any obligation on them to stay process in his case, while the interests of truth and godliness required their action, and while they were competent to it. We now assert that Presbytery had a right, and it was their duty to try and even depose Dr. B. in his absence under the citations given to him and his refusal to attend. To prove this, we quote from the Book of Discipline, page 46, "In case of neglect or refusal to attend, a second citation may be issued; and if not answered, a third, in like manner, with certification, that in case of non-compliance, the judicatory will proceed to discuss the libel, as if the accused were personally present; and that they will consider how far he is guilty of contumacy." To the same purpose, see Pardovan, Book IV., Tit. IV., § 12: "If a minister absent himself by leaving the place, and be contumacious, without making any relevant excuse after a new public citation, &c., he is to be holden as confest, and to be deposed and censured *instantly*, (instantly,) with the lesser excommunication."

The moral obligations of this rule are evident, (1.) Because contemptuous absence is a mockery of divine ordinances, and deserving the highest censure; and (2.) The most notorious profligate may sustain his former relation to the church, or his office, as long as he pleases, if the court may not act till he is present: and he, and not the court, is then constituted the sole judge. Civil courts would be obliged to act according to these ecclesiastical rules, had they not power to compel the presence of the accused. That grand rule of procedure, that a man is not to be condemned without a hearing, supposes that he is willing to avail himself of his privilege; and though he refuse all defence, the court is fully acquitted by giving him the privilege of a hearing.

But it is objected by the memorialists, that the Presbytery of Cambridge did not cite Dr. B. *three* times. This is technical-trifling. Do citations attain any virtue by the number three? Do those who make this objection believe that Dr. B. would have attended had the citation been repeated, when they say he could not attend after his declinature, and when he not only neglected all the citations sent him, but expressly and contemptuously refused to attend? But he was cited three times on the other charges against him, and that, too, after he had been present on trial. And his neglect of these citations, and his contemptuous declinature, were sufficient grounds of themselves for his deposition, according to the rules above quoted. On that one point, respecting the anonymous letters, Dr. B. was once notified that witnesses would be examined on the allegation of his authorship, and time and place were specified. After this, a formal charge, by Presbytery, of his responsibility for those letters,

was made against him, and on this formal charge, it is true, he was cited but twice; but both these citations were with certification that if he did not attend, Presbytery would proceed to issue the case as though he were present. Presbytery received from him, in answer to the first of these citations, a renewal of his contemptuous declinature, and an utter refusal to attend. Further citations, then, were really unnecessary, and were not required by the rules of process. The Book of Discipline, page 46, already quoted, says that a second and a third citation *may* be issued; plainly implying that to do so in ordinary cases will not be censurable delay, but as plainly intimating that it is not, in all cases, obligatory. Again, the Form of Process of the Church of Scotland, chapter ii., § 5, says, "All citations *apud acta*, (that is with certification,) are peremptory, and if instructed, infer contumacy if not obeyed." Pardovan, book iv., tit. iii., § 22, applying this rule, says, "If the person do not compare upon this peremptory citation, and no relevant excuse be proposed and sustained, the judicatory is to proceed to take cognition," &c. We would only add, farther, on this point, that the great reforming Assembly of the Church of Scotland, in 1638, deposed and excommunicated many bishops on account of their declinature alone, and without any citation after the declinature was given in. See Baillie's Letters.

After these views of the steps of discipline taken by the Presbytery, we shall now notice the anonymous letters themselves, and the evidence which appeared of Dr. B.'s responsibility for them. The memorialists say, respecting Presbytery's decision on this case, "that the evidence does not support the conclusion;" and that "it could not, for the charge itself was not true." They unequivocally assert that "Dr. B. neither wrote these letters nor caused them to be written." They say that "he offered to prove this to Synod and to his congregation by producing satisfactory evidence," but that his congregation "declined this offer, as being unnecessary." We think the congregation utterly mistaken in their opinion. It would have been important to Dr. B. had he been able and permitted to prove his innocence in this matter. And if it was to be so easily done, why were not the memorialists furnished with this "satisfactory evidence," since it would have been much better than their mere denials, however confidently made? But perhaps the offer to the congregation was like that made to Synod, which was, in fact, none at all. With apparent levity, he said in Synod, that *before he left home, a certain person had offered to father or mother the letters*. This was all the offer he made.

With respect to the anonymous letters, we shall notice their character, the evidence on which Presbytery rested the proof of their charge, and the circumstances under which the letters came into existence and notice.

As to the character of the letters, this will be best seen by a summary of their contents, and a statement of their falsehood.

1. Those letters charge one of the members of Presbytery with "beastly intoxication," and assert that "he stands so charged on the minutes" of Presbytery. Now no such minute is known to Presbytery, nor do they know of any of their members so charged.

2. Those letters charge the whole Presbytery with unfaithfulness in neglecting to censure that member for intoxication, though confessing his crime; and that they

neglected this because his services were wanted against Dr. Bullions. This, of course, falls to the ground, since no such case occurred.

3. They charge a member with slandering Dr. B. in a paper read by him in Presbytery. This charge was once made by Dr. B. in Presbytery, fully tried in his presence, that member was acquitted, and Dr. B. himself submitted to the decision.

4. Another member is charged with lying. This same charge was brought up by Dr. B. before the Commission, in Salem, in 1832, and the case was satisfactorily explained.

5. The same member is charged with error on an important point. The Presbytery know that member's sentiment on the point in question; they never had reason to believe that he held the error charged against him in these letters, and the charge was never laid in to Presbytery.

6. The general charge in these letters, in proof of which the above specifications, with some others of less importance, were adduced, is, That some members of Presbytery had tampered with members of Cambridge session, in order to form a party against Dr. Bullions. This charge was once made by Dr. B. in Presbytery, tried fully, the charge found *not proved*, and Dr. B. expressed his "conviction that the charge was without any foundation." Thus we see the charges in these letters were both weighty and false, and we leave it to the public to judge of the spirit and conduct of that man who endeavoured to give them currency by anonymous writing.

With respect to the evidence on which Presbytery found Dr. A. Bullions chargeable with the responsibility for these anonymous letters, we shall, to avoid prolixity, briefly state the principal things contained in the testimony before the Presbytery, as published in their documentary history. The following things will be found in that testimony:—

1. That one copy of the anonymous letters had Dr. A. Bullions' name on the back, as the *address* of the letter, in his own handwriting.

2. The letter so addressed was post-marked Franklinville, N. Y., and the post-master of that place, by letter, denied that it had passed from that office.

3. The words at the bottom of the same letter, namely, "N. B.—Let Mr. D. Gordon have the reading of the above," were in Dr. B.'s handwriting.

4. The Rev. J. P. Miller, George Mairs, and Peter Gordon had each a copy of this letter.

5. The Rev. George Mairs refused to let his copy be seen, on account of the handwriting.

6. Some months before the copies of this letter were sent to Messrs. Miller and Gordon, Dr. Bullions read a copy of the same to the Rev. Messrs. Whyte and Stalker.

7. Messrs. Whyte and Stalker entreated Dr. B. to do nothing with the paper, but to burn it.

Now, in order to see whether this testimony supported the Presbytery's conclusion, it must be distinctly understood what their conclusion was. Their charge was not simply that *Dr. B. wrote or caused those letters to be written*, as the memorialists represent it, but that he made himself responsible for them by writing, causing them to be written, publishing, or commending them. Thus they held, that to make himself responsible for slanderous letters was a relevant charge, and that even publishing or commending them was making himself responsible; and their conclusion was, that this charge was proved. Now the evidence is to be viewed in reference to any or all of these modes of responsibility; and we shall take a brief view of the evidence as it bears on these several modes.

1. The internal evidence of the letters themselves goes far to prove Dr. B. the author, for they contain many of his familiar expressions, and several of the very expressions which he, and he only, had used in Presbytery on such of the topics in the letters as had been in trial before them.

2. When the charge was first made in Presbytery by a member, and in his presence, he made no denial nor challenge of proof; nor did he ever, in any of his communications to Presbytery afterwards, send in a denial of the charge, though informed that it was pending for trial before them.

(To be continued.)

SECTION L.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.—HEB. vi. 4—6.

THIS scripture* is often used to contradict the final perseverance of the saints: and it is said,† that “The doctrine of the possibility of the final departure of true believers and penitents from the faith, is fully contained in these words; that it is evident they are spoken of such, from the word φωτισθεντες, *enlightened*, used by the same apostle, speaking to the same persons, in chap. x. 32, who were so enlightened as to know they had an inheritance in heaven; and from the words, “it is impossible to renew them again to repentance,” which imply that they had once truly repented, and were once truly in that state to which they were to be renewed, and their loss of it; and that these must fall totally and finally, because the apostle doth pronounce it a thing “impossible to renew them to repentance,” and, on this account, that they “crucified to themselves afresh the Son of God, and put him to an open shame.” But,

1. Admitting that these words are spoken of true believers, they will bear such a version and sense as will be so far from furnishing out an argument against the saints’ perseverance, that they will conclude one for it; for they may be rendered thus: “it is impossible that there should be any who have been once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift,” &c., και παραπεσοντας, “and yet fall away,” that is, it is impossible that such should fall away; agreeable to which is the Syriac version of the words, “it is impossible,” &c., דרוכ נחשן, “that they should sin again,” so as to die spiritually, or lose the grace of God, and stand in need of a new work of grace upon them, which would require the crucifying of Christ again, and a re-exposing him to public shame, which latter things are impossible; and, therefore, the former, namely, that they should sin in such a manner; for, according to this version, the several other things mentioned, are connected with the word *impossible*, as it is impossible that they should be renewed again to repentance, that they should again crucify the Son of God, and put him to shame. This sense of the words is also confirmed by the Arabic version. Moreover, should we read the words, “if they fall away,” they do but at most contain a supposition of the saints falling; et suppositio nil ponit in esse, *a supposition puts nothing in being*, proves no matter of fact; nor can it be concluded from hence that any such have fallen away, and are, at most, only expressive of the danger they are in, and of the difficulty of restoring them when fallen even partially; a total and final falling away being prevented by the grace and power of God.

2. It is not evident, from the characters of those persons, that they were true believers; they are said to be “once enlightened,” which some understand of their being once baptized; and it is certain, that φωτισμος and φωτισμα *illumination*, were used by the an-

* Remonstr. in Coll. Hag. art. v. p. 18; Act. Synod. circ. art. v. p. 235, &c.; Limborch, p. 709, 710.

† Whitby, p. 404—406; ed. 2. 394—396.

cients* for baptism, and φωτισόμενοι "enlightened once," for baptized persons; accordingly, the Syriac version reads the words thus, "who once נחורו לכעבודתא have descended into baptism;" the Ethiopic, "after they are baptized;" and it will not be denied that some such, as Simon Magus, may totally and finally fall away; but not to insist on this sense of the words. There are two sorts of enlightened persons, some who are savingly enlightened by the Spirit of God, to see their lost state and condition, their need of salvation by Christ, and their interest in it, who shall never perish; others are enlightened only in the doctrines of the gospel, and some to such a degree as to be able to preach them unto others, and yet entirely destitute of the grace of God; and when such fall away, they are no proofs nor instances of the apostacy of real saints. The enlightened persons in Heb. x. 32, are not the same with these here mentioned; for the believing Hebrews are manifestly distinguished from these, ver. 9; "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak;" and, therefore, though the Hebrews were so enlightened as to know that they had an inheritance in heaven, it does not follow that these were enlightened in the same manner, and so sincere Christians and true believers. They are also said to "have tasted of the heavenly gift," by which, whether we understand eternal life, or any of the blessings of grace, as a justifying righteousness, or, with the Greek fathers, ἀφισιν των αμαρτιων, the remission of sins; the meaning is, that they had some speculative notions about these things, and some desires after them, arising from a natural principle of self-love; or should Christ himself be intended by it, "tasting" of it, stands opposed to eating his flesh and drinking his blood, which is proper to true believers, who feed upon him, internally receive him, and are nourished by him; while hypocrites, and formal professors, only "taste" of him, have a superficial knowledge of him, and gust for him. In the same sense are they said to have "tasted the good word of God," the gospel, in the bare form and notion of it, "and the powers of the world to come," meaning either the state of the church, and the glorious things relating to it, after the first resurrection, which they might have some notional apprehensions of, or the joys and glories of heaven, on which they might be able to make some natural and pleasing reflections; or rather the δυνάμεις, miracles and mighty works in the former part of the gospel dispensation, or times of the Messiah, the Jews, עולם הבא "world to come," which many, as Judas, and others, were able to perform, who were not sincere Christians, nor true believers, and yet might be said to be "partakers of the Holy Ghost;" not of his person, nor his grace, but of his extraordinary gifts, in which sense not only Dr. Hammond,† but Dr. Whitby‡ himself, understands the phrase. Now it may be observed, that here is nothing said of these persons but what may be applied to hypocrites, nor any thing that is peculiar to true believers; these are not said to be regenerated, nor sanctified, nor justified, nor adopted, nor sealed by the Holy Spirit of God, all which are true of real saints. Besides, true believers are, in the context, manifestly distinguished from them, and are compared to the fruit-

* Justin Martyr Apolog. 2. p. 94; Clem. Alexandr. Pædagog. 1. c. 6, p. 93.

† In loc.

‡ Page 211; ed. 2. 266.

ful earth, when others are only likened to the barren land, ver. 8, 9; their case is mentioned with a view to stir up the saints to industry and diligence, ver. 11, 12, and so be the means of their final perseverance, which they had reason to expect and believe, from the immutability of God's counsel, the safe refuge in Christ, the nature of hope, the anchor sure and steadfast, and the entrance of Christ, their forerunner for them, into heaven, ver. 17—20.

3. The phrase, "it is impossible to renew them again to repentance," does not imply that they had once truly repented, and their loss of true repentance; that cannot be lost, it is inseparably connected with life and salvation, and therefore is called "repentance unto life," and "unto salvation." The repentance of these persons, like that of Cain, Pharaoh, and Judas, was only a show of one, a counterfeit one; and consequently, the renewing them again to repentance designs a renovation of them to that which they only seemed to have, and to make pretensions to.

4. It will be granted, that these persons might, and such as these may, fall finally and totally; but inasmuch as it does not appear that they were true penitents and believers, they are not to be mentioned as, nor allowed to be, instances of the final departure of such from the faith.

SECTION LI.

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?—HEB. x. 26—29.

THIS passage is used on a double* account, both to prove that Christ died for some that perish—otherwise, it is asked, "in what tolerable sense can it be said, that no farther "sacrifice for sin" remains to them, for whom no sacrifice was ever offered or intended? and who were, by God's own decree, excluded from any interest in Christ's death before they came into the world; how were they "sanctified by the blood of the covenant," from which they were inevitably excluded from the beginning of the world?"—and also to prove that true believers, such as these are said to be, from their being "sanctified by the blood of the covenant;" may finally and totally fall away, since they so sinned that there remained "no more sacrifice for their sin," and did "despite to the Spirit of grace." But,

1. It is not evident from what is said of these persons, that they were true believers; nor from the apostles speaking in the first person plural, "we," which may seem to include himself, who was a true believer, and a chosen vessel of salvation; since the apostle frequently makes use of this way of speaking, not so much with regard to himself, as others; that so what he delivered might come with greater weight upon them, and be more readily received by them, when they observed he entertained no hard thoughts or jea-

* Remonstr. in Coll. Hag. Art. ii. p. 176, 178. and art. v. p. 18; Act. Synod. circa. art. ii. p. 346, art v. p. 235; Limborch, p. 322, 709; Curcellæus, p. 360; Whitby, p. 140, 406, 407; ed. 2. 137, 396, 397.

lousies of them; which would greatly distress the minds of those who were truly gracious; see Heb. ii. 1, and iv. 1. Besides, it may be observed, that sometimes, when the apostles express themselves in this manner, they do not design themselves at all, but others, who were under the same visible profession of religion, and belonged to the same community of believers as they did; see 1 Pet. iv. 3; Tit. iii. 3; Eph. ii. 3; compared with Acts xxii. 3, and xxvi. 5; Phil. iii. 6. But admitting that the apostle and other true believers are included in these words, they are not a categorical but a hypothetical proposition; which may be true when one or both parts of it are impossible; the truth of such a proposition consisting in the connexion of the antecedent and consequent; as when our Lord said to the Jews, "If I should say I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you;"* the proposition is true, when both the parts of it were impossible; it was impossible that Christ should say, he knew not the Father; and it was equally impossible that he should be a liar like unto them. So the proposition in the text is true, though it is impossible that true believers should so sin as to perish eternally; when I say impossible, I do not mean that it is impossible considering their own weakness, and the power of Satan, and should they be left to their own corruptions, and the temptations of the evil one; but impossible, considering the grace of God, the power of Christ, their security in an everlasting covenant, &c. Hence it follows, that such a proposition neither proves that they could or should, or did sin in this manner. It may be said, that then such a proposition is delivered in vain, and answers no purpose. I reply; It may be of service, though the condition is impossible, as to illustrate and certify the just punishment of apostates; for if true believers themselves would be so severely punished, should they, or were it possible they should sin after this manner; such hypocritical wicked persons, and vile apostates, could not expect to escape divine vengeance; yea, such declarations may be made use of by the Spirit of God, to stir up true believers to diligence in duty, and watchfulness, against every degree of apostacy, and so be the means of their final perseverance; and after all, it is plain that the apostle distinguishes true believers, ver. 38, 39; from these apostates, whose custom it had been to forsake the assembling of themselves together, ver. 25. Nor does it appear that these were real saints, from their having "received the knowledge of the truth;" whether by "the truth" we understand Jesus Christ, or the Scriptures, or the gospel, or some particular doctrine of it, especially the principal one, salvation by Christ; which I am inclined to think is intended; since, besides a saving knowledge of these things, which is peculiar to true believers, there is a notional one common to them with others; who may not only give their assent to them as true, but have much light into them, be able to explain them, and preach them to others, and yet be destitute of the grace of God; and therefore if such persons sin, and finally and totally fall away, they are no instances nor proofs of the final and total apostacy of real saints; nor is it manifest that such were the persons here spoken of, from their being "sanctified by the blood of the covenant," supposing the words are to be understood of them; seeing they have no relation to the inward sanctification of our nature by the Spirit of Christ, as Dr. Whitby† himself owns; who contends that they should be understood of remission of sins, and justification by the blood of Christ,

* John viii. 55.

† Pages 141, 406; ed. 2. 138. 396.

which these persons had received. It is true indeed, that the blessings of pardon and justification, are by and through the blood of the covenant; and are sometimes expressed by sanctifying, purging, and cleansing; see Heb. ix. 13, 14, x. 10, xiii. 12; 1 John i. 7; yet cannot be designed here; for either these persons received a partial remission of sins, and a partial justification from them, or a full remission of all their sins, and a plenary discharge from them, not a partial one; for when God forgives for Christ's sake, he forgives all trespasses, and justifies from all sin: if then these persons had received the forgiveness of all their sins, and were justified from all their iniquities, they would have stood in no need of any more sacrifice for sin; see Heb. x. 18, nor would there be any foundation for punishment of any kind, much less for one so severe as is here represented; see Rom. viii. 1, 30, 33. If then these words are to be considered as spoken of these apostates, the meaning of them is, either that they were sanctified, or separated from others, by a visible profession of religion, had given themselves up to a church, to walk with them in the ordinances of the gospel, had submitted to baptism, and partook of the Lord's supper, and drank of the cup, "the blood of the new testament," or "covenant;" though they did not spiritually discern the body and blood of Christ in that ordinance; but "counted" the bread and wine, the symbols thereof, as "common" things; or that they professed themselves, and were looked upon by others, to be truly sanctified by the Spirit, and justified by the blood of Christ. Persons are often described, not by what they really are, but by what they are thought to be. Thus the apostle writing to the Corinthians, says of them all, that they were sanctified in Christ Jesus, and by his Spirit, because they professed themselves to be so, and in the opinion of others, were so; though it cannot be thought that they were all of them really so. But after all, it seems most probable, that not "he that trod the Son of God under foot, but "the Son of God" himself, is said here to be "sanctified by the blood of the covenant;" which is mentioned as an aggravation of the wickedness of such that count that blood unholy, by which the Son of God himself was sanctified, that is, set apart, hallowed, and consecrated; as Aaron and his sons were by the sacrifices of slain beasts, to minister in the priest's office: Christ, when he had offered himself, and shed his precious blood, whereby the covenant of grace was ratified and confirmed, was, through the blood of that covenant, brought again from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God with power; and being set down at God's right hand, ever lives to make intercession for us; which is the other part of his priestly office he is sanctified by his own blood to accomplish.

2. The crimes which are supposed of these persons, or they are charged with, such as "sinning wilfully;" which is not to be understood of the common infirmities of life, or even grosser acts of sin, which may be voluntarily committed by the saints after regeneration, as were by David, Peter, and others; but of a denial of "the truth" of the gospel, that salvation is by Christ, against all the evidence of it, and convictions of their own minds: "treading under foot the Son of God," as much as in them lay, pulling him from his throne, and trampling on him, stripping him of the glory of his person and sacrifice, denying him to be the eternal Son of God;

"counting the blood of the covenant an unholy" or "common thing," putting it upon a level with the blood of a bullock, or at most, counting it, אֵין רַכְלָנִשׁ, according to the Syriac version, as the blood of any other man, yea, reckoning it as unclean and abominable; and doing "despite to the Spirit of grace," rejecting him as a lying spirit, and his gifts, and miracles, as illusions, as Dr. Whitby observes;* I say such crimes as these, are what can never be thought to have been committed, or capable of being committed, by such who have truly tasted that the Lord is gracious.

3. The declaration made to these persons, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins;" no more typical sacrifices at Jerusalem, nor any more real sacrifice of the same kind, that has been offered up by Christ, who will not come and die again, and repeat his sacrifice; and therefore, they having denied salvation by him, and the virtue of his former sacrifice, can never expect another; but that when he appears a second time, he will bring on an awful judgment, which will issue in the devouring flames of his wrath and indignation, and be a sorer punishment than the transgressors of Moses' law endured; which was but a temporal, this an eternal death; such a declaration of wrath and vengeance, I say, proves indeed that these persons fell finally and totally; but inasmuch as they cannot be proved to be true believers, it will not be evident from hence, either that Christ died for such as perish: or that those who have truly believed may totally and finally fall away.

SECTION LII.

Now the just shall live by faith; but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.—HEB. x. 38.

THE doctrine of the possibility of the final departure of true believers from the faith, is said† to be still farther evident from these words: Wherefore,

1. For the right understanding of this passage it will be proper to consult the original text in Hab. ii. 4, from whence it is taken. The word עָפַלָה which the Septuagint have rendered by *υποστειλῃται*, here used by the apostle, and in our version translated "draw back," is, according to R. David Kimchi‡ עֲפִילָה חֲדָרִים עֲפִילָה, expressive of pride and haughtiness of heart; and according to Jarchi§ is לִשְׁכֵּן עֲפִילָה, a word that has the signification of impudence in it; R. Moses Kimchi|| takes it to be the same with עָפַל which signifies a tower or a fortified place; and thinks it designs one that betakes himself to such a place for shelter from the enemy, and seeks not to God for deliverance; from all which senses of the word we may conclude that such a one is intended who is proud, haughty, vain and conceited, lifted up with his own righteousness, in which he trusts, and in which he imagines himself to be safe from all evil; and so stands opposed to the "just" man who "lives by faith," walks humbly with God, in a dependence, not on his own, but Christ's righteousness, in which he is safe from all wrath and condemnation, and secure of the divine favour; while the other will be

* Page 141, 406; ed. 2. 138, 396. † Whitby, p. 407; ed. 2. 397. ‡ In loc. § Ibid.

|| In R. David Kimchi in loc., and in lib. Shorash. rad. עָפַל. So Philip Aquinas in Lex. rad. עָפַל.

so far from being the object of God's delight and pleasure, that he will lie under his sad displeasure, and feel his keen and just resentment. The Greek word *υποστειλῆται*, used by the Septuagint and the apostle, signifies a withdrawing through fear, as Peter withdrew because of the circumcision, Gal. ii. 12, and may here intend a forsaking the assemblies of the saints (ver. 25, which was the manner of some,) and all the ordinances of public worship, through fear of reproach, scandal, and persecution, withholding truth, shunning to declare it, or to maintain a profession of it, contrary to what the apostle Paul says of himself, Acts xx. 20, 27, where this word is twice used, and may design one who *υποκρινεται, δολεινεται*, "plays the hypocrite," and "deals deceitfully," as a late writer* observes, the word is rendered by Hesychius and Suidas; than which, to do in religious affairs especially, nothing is more abominable to God; and, in short, may be expressive of an entire departure and total apostacy from the faith, not from true saving faith, but from a mere profession of the grace and doctrine of faith. But then,

2. It must be observed, that *εαν υποστειλῆται*, "if he" or "any one draws back," does not refer plainly, as it is said,† to the "just man" who "lives by his faith;" for as the drawer back, in ver. 39, stands opposed to him that "believes to the saving of his soul;" so the drawer back, in ver. 38, stands opposed to "the just that lives by faith," which is owned by the author I refer to, and consequently cannot be the same person; this will still more fully appear from the order of the words in Hab. ii. 4, "he that is lifted up, or withdraws himself,‡ or fails, his soul," that is, God's, "shall have no pleasure in him; but the just shall live by his faith;" therefore the words do not plainly suppose, as is asserted,§ that "the just man who lives by that faith," in which, if he persisted, he would save his soul, may "draw back to perdition;" nor is this evident from the ensuing words, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him," for they do not plainly intimate, as is affirmed, that God took pleasure in him before his drawing back; since it is not said, "my soul shall have no more, or no farther pleasure in him," but "shall have no pleasure in him;" which does not necessarily suppose that he had any pleasure in him before, but that he should have none in him hereafter. Besides, such who are the objects of God's delight and pleasure are always so; nothing can separate from the love of God, which is always joined with delight in his people.

3. Admitting that the words do plainly refer to the just man that lives by faith, such a one cannot "draw back to perdition;" for that is denied in the following verse; is contrary to an express declaration, "a just man falleth seven times a day, and riseth up again;"|| and inconsistent with a divine promise, "the righteous shall hold on his way;"¶ and even with this in the text, "the just shall live by faith;" and therefore shall not die the second death, or so draw back as to be eternally lost; though his zeal may abate, his love grow cold, and he fall from some degree of steadfastness in faith; but allowing that drawing back to perdition is here supposed of the just man, it is no more than a hypothetical proposition, which proves not

* Whitby, p. 408; ed. 2. 397.

† Ibid.

‡ Vide Pocock Not. Misc. in Port. Moels, p. 43, 44.

§ Whitby, p. 408; ed. 2. 397.

|| Prov. xxiv. 16.

¶ Job xvii. 9.

that ever any just man did, could, or should so draw back. The nature and use of such conditional propositions, in which the condition, or thing supposed is impossible, has been shown under the foregoing section. But it is observed,* that *καὶ εἰ*, may be rendered not hypothetically, "and if," but "and when he draweth back:" be it so, it is well known that a condition is as well and as frequently expressed by "when, the *adverb* of time, as by the conjunction "if," of which numerous instances might be given. The objection from the impossibility of the condition, and the uselessness of threats founded thereon, is answered in the preceding section.

4. I see not why the supplement "any man," should not stand, made by our translators, which the grammatical construction of the words seems to require. Grotius owns the justness of it. Now this carries off the sense from "the just man that lives by faith," to *any* of those who had made an external profession of religion, but were withdrawing themselves from the communion of the saints, through fear of persecution, who are threatened with the just resentment and displeasure of the Almighty; but lest this should be startling and surprising to true believers, the apostle adds, "but we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." So far is this from proving the final and total apostacy of real saints, that it establishes the doctrine of their final perseverance; for he that is "just" or righteous by the "everlasting righteousness of Christ," will ever remain so; who will "live" spiritually, and that by "faith" which will never fail, and is inseparably connected with salvation, and so he shall never die.

SECTION LIII.

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.—2 PET. i. 10.

It is said,† "That the election mentioned in the Holy Scriptures is not that of particular persons, but only of churches and nations; that it is to the enjoyment of the means of grace which puts them in a capacity of having all the privileges and blessings which God hath promised to his church and people, and is only a conditional one, upon our perseverance in a life of holiness, and is to be made sure unto us by good works, according to this exhortation." But,

1. Though it will be granted that there was a national election of the Jews, who enjoyed the means of grace, the word and ordinances of God, and had peculiar blessings and privileges in consequence of this special choice of them as a nation; yet this was not an election to salvation elsewhere spoken of, and about which our controversy is, and therefore in vain are so many passages produced by Dr. Whitby,‡ out of the Old Testament, to prove what nobody denies. And though sometimes whole communities or churches are by the apostles styled the elect of God, as the churches of Colosse, Thessalonica, Babylon,§ and others, yet they were not chosen as such; nor is it to be thought that all of them were ordained to eternal life, though the apostles speak of them in the bulk as the elect of God, being under a visible profession of religion; just as they call them all "saints, the sanctified, and faithful in Christ Jesus; though it is not

* Whitby, p. 409; ed. 2. 398. † Ibid. p. 36; ed. 2. 35.

‡ Pages 37—40; ed. 2. 36—39. § Col. iii. 12; 1 Thess. i. 4; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. v. 13.

to be supposed that all the individual members of these churches were real saints. However, it does not appear that the persons the apostle Peter wrote his epistles to were either a nation or a church, being "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia;"* they are indeed called "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people;"† but that is only in allusion to typical Israel, and the shadowy election of that people as a nation. It is certain that these persons were chosen not merely to external means and outward blessings and privileges, but to grace here, and glory hereafter; for they were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus;" and in consequence of this, "were begotten again to a lively hope" of "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven," and were "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."‡ They were a set of particular persons, who "had obtained like precious faith with" the apostles,§ and were every one to use "diligence to make sure" their own, and not another's "calling and election;" and so not a national or church-election, but a personal one.

2. This election is not a conditional one, depending on perseverance in a life of holiness. The text does not say, "if ye do these things" ye shall be elected, or your election shall remain firm and sure, but "ye shall never fall;" meaning, not into lesser sins and infirmities of life, "for in many things we offend all," *πταιομεν απαντες*, "we all fall;" but into the great evil of a final and total apostacy; or "ye shall never fall,"|| so as to be lost and perish. The final perseverance of the saints is secured by electing grace; that is not the cause, but the fruit of election; election does not depend upon that, but that upon election.

3. "Election and calling" here mentioned with it, are to be "made sure;" not that they can be made surer in themselves, nor with respect to God, than they are, being both "not according to our works, but according to the purpose and grace of" God, which cannot be frustrated; and so stand upon a sure foundation, which can never fail, and are inseparably connected with glorification, Rom. viii. 30. Nor are these to be made sure by the saints "to themselves, for, though they may have some doubts and scruples in their minds about their interest in these things, and an assurance of which may be attained; yet it is not their work but the work of the Spirit of God, to certify or assure them of their vocation and election of God. But diligence is to be used by the saints, to make sure their calling and election "to others;" either to their fellow-Christians, which they may do by conversing with them about the work of grace upon their souls, or rather to the world, and that *δια των καλων εργαων*, "by good works;" as these words are read in two manuscript copies of Beza's, and by the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Vulgate Latin; and then the meaning is, be careful to maintain good works, be diligent in doing these things, which, through the grace of God, will not only be the means of your final perseverance, but also of making your calling and election sure to others; you will hereby certify and assure others, give the best evidence to the world you

* 1 Pet. i. 1.

† Ch. ii. 9.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 2—5.

§ 2 Pet. i. 1.

|| James iii. 2.

are capable of giving, or they of receiving, that you are the called and chosen of God you profess yourselves to be.

SECTION LIV.

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.—2 Pet. ii. 1.

THIS passage of Scripture is often produced as a proof both of the saints' final and total apostacy,* and of universal redemption; or that, besides those that are saved, Christ died also for them that perish. Dr. Whitby† mentions the several answers which different men give to these words: one saith, Christ bought these persons only to be slaves; another, that he died to rescue them from temporal, but not eternal punishments; a third, that he died for them because he gave a sufficient price for them; a fourth, that they denied that Lord whom they professed to have bought them; and a fifth, that they denied him, who, in the judgment of other men, had bought them. Upon which he observes, that they are so extravagant that it is as easy to confute as to recite them.

1. I do not think myself concerned to defend any of these senses of the text mentioned, judging neither of them to be the meaning of the words, and so have nothing to do with the reasonings made use of in the confutation of them; though, perhaps, the two latter are not so extravagant as represented. However, in order to give the genuine sense of this text, let it be observed,

2. That Christ is not here at all spoken of; nor is there one syllable of his dying for any persons, in any sense whatever. The word *δοσποτης*, "Lord," does not design Christ, but God the Father of Christ. The only places besides this where this word is used, when applied to a divine person, are Luke ii. 29, Acts iv. 24, 2 Tim. ii. 21, Jude ver. 4, Rev. vi. 10, in all which places God the Father is plainly intended, and in most of them manifestly distinguished from Christ; nor is there any thing in this text or context which obliges us to understand it of the Son of God; nor should this be thought any diminution of the glory of Christ, since the word *δοσποτης* is properly expressive only of that power which masters have over their servants; whereas the word *κυριος*, which is used whenever Christ is called Lord, signifies that dominion and authority which princes have over their subjects. Besides, Christ is called "the King of kings, the Lord of lords," and "the only Potentate;" yea, "God over all, blessed for ever." Moreover,

3. When these persons are said to be "*bought*," the meaning is, not that they were redeemed by the blood of Christ, for, as is before observed, Christ is not intended. Besides, whenever redemption by Christ is spoken of, the price is usually mentioned, or some circumstance or another which fully determines the sense of it; see Acts xx. 28; 1 Cor. vi. 20; Eph. i. 7; 1 Pet. i. 18—19; Rev. v. 9, and xiv. 3—4, whereas here is not the least hint of any thing of this kind. Add to this, that such who are redeemed by Christ, are

* Remonstr. in Coll. Hag. art. v. p. 17, and art. ii. v. p. 132, 160; Act. Synod. circ. art. ii. p. 354, &c.; Curcell. p. 360; Limborch, p. 322.

† Page 141, 142; ed. 2. 138, 139.

never left to deny him, so as to perish eternally; for could such be lost, or bring on themselves swift destruction, Christ's purchase would be in vain, and the ransom-price be paid for naught. But,

4. The "*buying*" regards temporal deliverance, and particularly the redemption of the people of Israel out of Egypt; who are therefore called "*the people the Lord had purchased.*" The phrase is borrowed from Deut. xxxii. 6; "*Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee and established thee?*" Nor is this the only place the apostle Peter refers to in this chapter; see ver. 12, 13, compared with Deut. xxxii. 5. Now the persons the apostle writes to, were Jews, "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia;" a people who, in all ages, valued themselves upon, and boasted mightily of their being the "bought, purchased people of the Lord;" wherefore Peter makes use of this phrase much in the same manner as Moses had done before him, to aggravate the ingratitude and impiety of these false teachers among the Jews; that they should deny, if not in words, at least in works, that mighty Jehovah, who had of old redeemed their fathers out of Egypt, with a stretched-out arm, and, in successive ages, had distinguished them with peculiar favours; being "ungodly men, turning the grace," the doctrine of the grace "of God, into lasciviousness." Hence,

5. Nothing can be concluded from this passage in favour of Christ's dying for them that perish; since neither Christ, nor the death of Christ, nor redemption by his blood, are here once mentioned, nor in the least intended. Nor can these words be thought to be a proof and instance of the final and total apostacy of real saints, since there is not any thing said of these false teachers, which gives any reason to believe that they were true believers in Christ, or ever had the grace of the Spirit wrought in their souls.

SECTION LV.

For if after that they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.—2 Pet. ii. 20—22.

THIS Scripture generally* stands among the proofs of the apostacy of real saints; and it is said,† that the possibility of the final and total falling away of true believers, may be strongly argued from these words.

1. It will be allowed that the persons here spoken of, finally and totally fell away; since they are not only said "to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them," but to "be again entangled in the pollutions of the world, and overcome;" yea, to "turn" like "the dog to his vomit," and "the sow to her wallowing in the mire:" so that "the latter end with them is worse than the beginning." Yet,

* Remonstr. in Coll. Hag. art. v. p. 17; Act. Synod. circ. art. v. p. 242, &c.; Limborch, p. 711.

† Whitby, p. 409; ed. 2. 398.

2. Nothing is said of them which discovers them to have been true believers. They might have externally "escaped the pollutions of the world, reformed in their outward lives and conversations, through a notional "knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" professed the "way of righteousness," and, for a while, visibly walked in it, and submitted to "the holy commandments" and ordinances of Christ, and yet not have been partakers of the grace of God; nor is it evident that the apostle here speaks of such who had "obtained like precious faith with" them; but of some third persons distinct from them. Perhaps the highest character given them is in ver. 18, which is, that they were such who "were clean," *οντως*, truly and really, as Dr. Whitby renders the word, "escaped from them who live," *εν πλανη*, "in error;"* which, he observes, is to be understood, not of judgment, but of deceitful lusts. But let it be considered that there are different readings of this text; some copies, instead of *οντως* read *ολιγως* "within a little," or "almost;" so the Alexandrian MS. in the Polyglott Bible, and two books of Beza's; others *ολιγον*; so the Complutensian edition, and the King of Spain's Bible; agreeably the Vulgate Latin renders it *paululum*, "a very little," or "a very little time." The Syriac version reads it *בכיל קליל*, "in a few words," or "almost;" and, according to the Ethiopic version, "a few persons" are designed. From all which, this sense of the words may be collected, that there were some few persons, who, in some few instances, had almost, or within a very little, or for a little time, escaped from such who lived in error, being carried away with divers and strange doctrines. But admitting that *οντως* is the true reading, and that *πλανη* signifies not error of judgment, but deceitful lusts; it is possible that men may truly and really escape, not only from idolaters and false teachers, and so have the form of sound doctrine, whilst they deny the power of it, but also reform and withdraw from openly profane and scandalous sinners, and yet not be true believers, as it appears these were not; since they openly turned to, and appeared to be what they really were; as "the dog turns to his own vomit, and the sow to her wallowing in the mire."

SECTION LVI.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise (as some men count slackness,) but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.—2 PET. iii. 9.

THIS scripture appears among those which are said† to be very many clear and express ones for the doctrine of universal redemption; and it is observed,‡ "that *τινες*, opposed to *παντες*, is a distributive of all, and, therefore, signifies, God is not willing that any one of the whole rank of men should perish." But,

1. It is not true that God is not willing any one individual of the human race should perish, since he has "made" and appointed "the wicked for the day" of evil, even "ungodly men," who are "fore-ordained to this condemnation," such as are "vessels of wrath fitted

* Whitby, p. 410, ed. 2. 399.

† Remonstr. in Coll. Hag. art. ii. p. 160, 181, 196; Curcellæus, p. 364; Limborch, p. 333; Whitby, p. 113; ed. 2. 111.

‡ Whitby, p. 124; ed. 2. 121.

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